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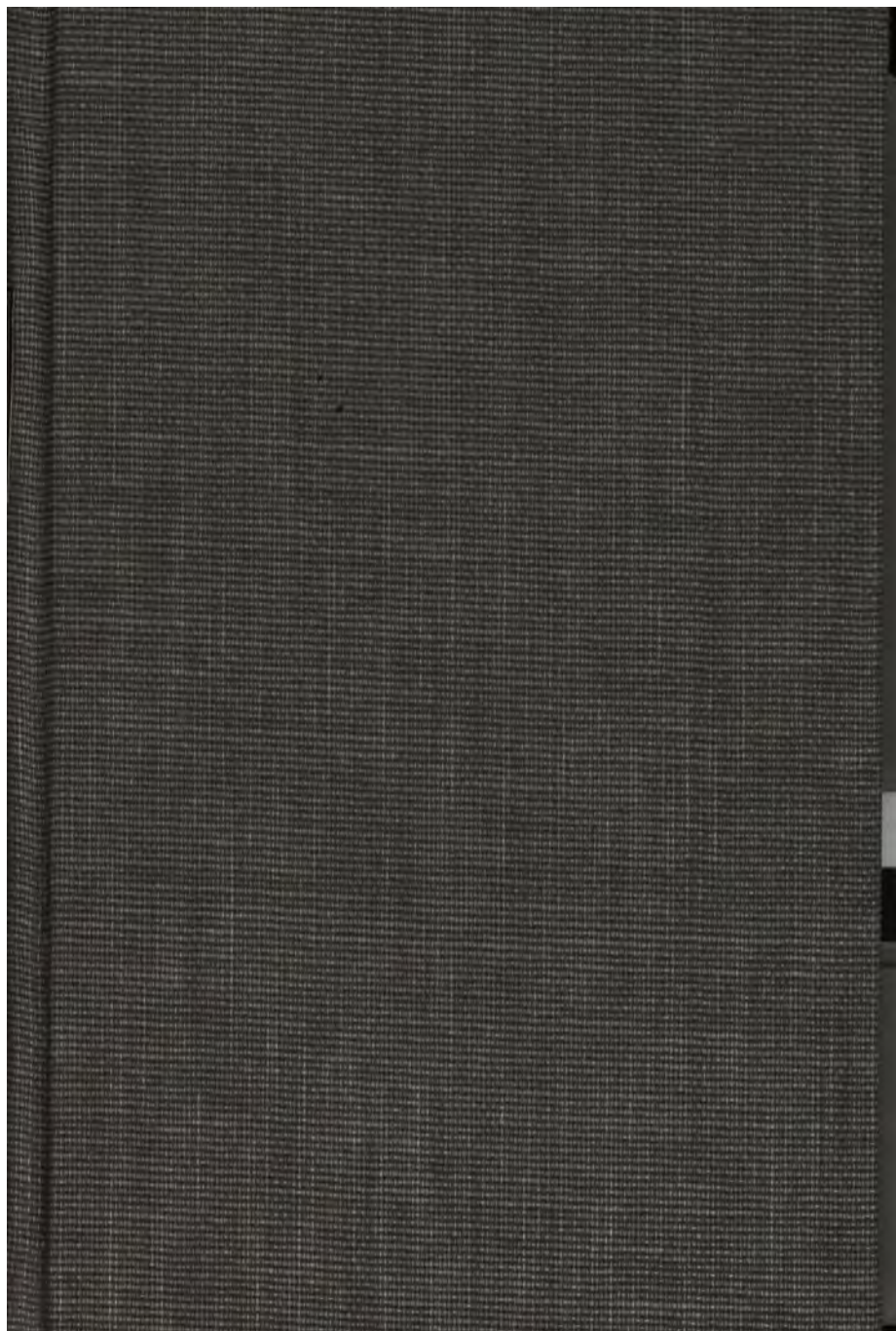
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The Gift of
Samuel A. Green,

of Groton,
Senior Sophister in
Harvard College,

Rec'd. July 2,
1857.

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SCENES

IN A

VESTRY :

BEING AN

ACCOUNT OF THE LATE CONTROVERSY

IN THE

South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta.

Admitted
REPORTED BY D. C. WESTON, ESQ.

“Write this for a memorial in a book.” Ex. xvii, 14.

5+

AUGUSTA:

WM. R. SMITH & Co.—PRINTERS.

1841.

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From the Court

Entered, according to an act of Congress, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Maine, by Daniel C. Weston, in the year eighteen hundred and forty one.

P R E F A C E .

THIS volume is not designed to thrust upon the public, private griefs, or to excite its sympathy; but is published at the earnest solicitation of friends and others, who have become interested in the "antic tricks," recently played before "high heaven," by the South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta. The misrepresentation of the facts, by the chief actors on the part of that church, persevered in even to the present moment, together with the impossibility of verbally explaining to each, anxious to know the truth of their statements, the history of the affair, are the principal reasons inducing to this disclosure.

That minuteness of detail which will give additional value to this report, in the estimation of those already interested, will perhaps be wearisome to others.

But though this volume possesses more of local than general interest, and will be more valuable to friends than to others, yet it is, in the opinion of the reporter, worthy the attention of the curious, as opening a new field of observation, and as giving the "outside barbarians," a view of the "celestials" but seldom enjoyed. There is no report of this kind, of anything like a modern date, before the public. The tyranny practised in certain churches, over isolated people, whose feeble voices are lost amid the roar of affiliated bigotry, is little understood. The results are known by the annual reports in the "official organs." And now and then, a letter of admonition from some clergyman, consigning a member of his flock to outer darkness, for attending other preaching than his own, finds its way into the papers. But the system of tactics, the arcana of the process, are almost wholly unknown.

CHAPTER I.

"Be not righteous overmuch." Ec. vii, 16.

"Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

Matt. xxiii, 24.

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Rev. xxii, 18.

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who come in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour." Gal. xi, 4, 5.

THE South parish congregational church in Augusta was originally established on liberal principles. It recognized no creed but the Bible, and allowed no spiritual interpreter to come between the conscience and its God. The attempt (always abortive, yet constantly made by narrow minded men who have never troubled themselves with looking into the history of their race) to produce uniformity of opinion in the most minute particulars, was never made by the high minded founders of this society: but all who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and desired to profess him before men, avouching Jehovah to be their God, were received into its bosom and embraced as brothers and sisters of the great household of faith.

What though they differed on the great and exciting topics of the day! What though they were dissimilar in their views of domestic economy—in the management of their children—in their mode of receiving and entertaining company! They were not thereby prevented from meeting in harmony around the table of their Lord.

That monastic rigor which, under the garb of superior sanctity, would denounce the innocent recreations of life, met with a constant rebuke from the pious and lamented DANIEL STONE, the former pastor of this church. Any attempts, also, to make religion consist

in any affected plainness of dress, by crying out "to what purpose is this waste," obtained no countenance from this excellent man.

Under his successor, the Rev. Benjamin Tappan, a new order of things was gradually introduced. Ultra in all his feelings and views, he soon gathered around him a clique of kindred sentiments; and there was commenced a regular encroachment upon that liberty wherewith Christ has made his followers free.

Committees of examination for candidates for admission were appointed, which cooperated in carrying out the views of the pastor; and none were admitted who did not come fully up to what *he* regarded as the fundamentals in theology; so that a system was silently in operation which eventuated in bringing into the church a majority of men and women who sympathized with the *ultras* in religious sentiment, and who, from the confidence they felt in the piety, good sense, and judgment of their minister, would be likely to adopt without much hesitation, any views of practical duty that he might suggest. True there were many exceptions to this class, but the number was insufficient to affect the result.

When sufficient strength was attained for the purpose, a proposition was brought forward to have appended to the covenant, a creed, drawn up to meet the views of the pastor, and those who acted with him: but this was strenuously opposed by the old patriarchs of the church, among the foremost of whom, were the lamented Judge BRIDGE and the Hon. NATHAN WESTON. The class which these gentlemen represented were generally sound in their theology, according to the orthodox interpretation of soundness; but they saw in the adoption of a strict creed the germ of farther demands, and they were unwilling that this church, originally Arminian, should, in their day, by the course proposed, subject itself to all the usages and customs of Calvinistic societies.

The opposition to this measure from a determined minority, induced the majority to defer it to a more convenient season, the more readily as by their committees

of examination, they were in possession of all the practical benefits which would have resulted from its adoption.

It is not our intention to trace every movement of the pastor and his friends. The length ultimately reached will sufficiently show the extent of the intermediate space. We will, however, give an incident or two, taken at random from many of the kind, to show how much the society had changed from days of yore, both in pastor and people.

For instance—a lady was remonstrated with by Mr. Tappan for allowing her daughter to wear a gold watch.

Again—a lady had decorated her bonnet with some foreign flowers, of rare beauty, sent to her by a far distant husband with the request that she would wear them. They attracted the attention of some superlatively pious person who could not bear to see a christian countenancing in this way “the vanities of the world.” Perhaps it would be uncharitable to suppose that the impossibility of procuring similar ornaments, enhanced the guilt of the offender. The “cause of grief” was forthwith communicated to the pastor, who instead of rebuking the censorious spirit of the “aggrieved party,” and telling her that she would better serve God by watching her own heart instead of scrutinizing the dresses of others called upon the “offender” for an explanation of her conduct. When told that the flowers were worn at the request of her husband, we believe he was satisfied. What would have been her doom without this palliation is uncertain.

Is it to be wondered at that personal liberty was invaded in other respects?

Many members of the church had long been in the habit of having their children taught the accomplishment of dancing, and of allowing the “young people” to enjoy at their houses a social dance on suitable occasions. This was thought by Mr. Tappan and others to be a sore evil—a reproach to religion and to the church, which they were determined to remove.

Attempts were made to frown down the amusement, by branding those who allowed it as “pleasure loving

christians," and claiming for those who kept aloof from the "unclean thing" superior sanctity. But unfortunately for the success of this scheme, those parents who allowed the amusement were the very salt of the church. Making no pretensions to extraordinary piety, but silently performing the duties of life, they had acquired a respect and confidence which placed them beyond the reach of this mode of attack.

Some "church action" was then determined upon; and a circumstance that occurred on the opposite side of the globe afforded a pretext for commencing operations.

Sometime in the year '38, information was received that a lady (a member of this church) who resided at Honolulu, a principal place on one of the Sandwich Islands, had there attended a ball with her husband under "aggravating circumstances." Though this was a solitary instance of the kind, within the knowledge of the writer, a resolution entirely uncalled for and which could then have no application to any member in this quarter of the world, was forthwith passed, denouncing the attendance of church members upon public balls.

Under cover of this, another resolution was adopted at the same time, declaring *"it to be the duty of church members to refrain from that amusement, (dancing) entirely."*

Now on Thanksgiving evenings, when families were collected together, and sometimes at a little social gathering at the house of a christian neighbor, some of the younger members would join in the dance; and this last resolution was meant, in the first place to apply to all cases of this kind, and by implication to do a great deal more: For if this amusement was wrong for professors, of whatever age, it followed that they should never allow it in their houses, or be in any manner accessory thereto. And it followed, of course, that those members who had furnished music for these unballowed scenes, by their skill on the piano, must cease to oblige in this way, their young friends.

Having spread this ample net which could not fail to take a large draught, they watched its operation; and were chagrined to find that children were still allowed to dance and that members of the church continued to play for them.

What was to be done? Should they pull in the net? It was not very strong and there was danger of its breaking. On the whole it was thought best to try the effect of some "church action" still more impressive.

Accordingly those resolutions, "and also the subject matter of parental duty, so far as christian parents, and the amusement of dancing by their children, is involved," were referred to a committee of two chosen men, Carleton Dole and Dea. E. S. Tappan, the brother of the pastor.*

After several months of careful deliberation the following document was presented.

REPORT

Of a Committee to the Congregational Church in the South Parish, Augusta. February, 1840.

"The Committee, to which were referred the following resolutions:—

1st, "That we consider public balls, as exerting an influence decidedly unfavorable to the interests of religion, and an attendance upon them, by professing christians, as inconsistent with their covenant obligations"—and 2d, "That since the amusement of dancing, as practised under other circumstances, is almost invariably liable, to some extent, to the same objections as public balls, very naturally leads to an attendance upon them, and will occasion, when practised by professing christians, a measure of the same reproach—we consider it the duty of church members to refrain from that amusement entirely"—passed by this church, Oct. 4, 1838—and also the subject matter of *parental* duty, so far as *christian parents*, and the amusement of dancing by *their children*, is involved,—would respectfully and affectionately present the following views for consideration.

The *standard*, by which we are to *prove* all things, is none oth-

*One of these gentlemen was a man afflicted by ill health and gloomy notions, and the other an elderly gentleman and a bachelor. A suitable committee, one would suppose, to decide upon "the subject matter of parental duty."

or than the great law of Jehovah's moral kingdom—the *law of love*, as presented by Christ and his apostles. In regard to that law, it is of primary consequence that christians should have *clear, correct views, and thorough convictions*; should be *fully persuaded* in their own minds; and *never act on a principle*, with reference to which they have *misgivings* of heart, and *indecision* of conscience. Among those who are members of Christ's body, unity of sentiment, similarity of practical obedience, the possession of that spirit of wisdom and love by which they shall become of *one heart and one mind*, are earnestly to be desired and fervently sought. We know, however, that there are very many causes that operate to produce *diversity* of views and *difference* of conduct among professors of evangelical religion. So long as those, who have been born from above, are sanctified but in part, and see as through a glass darkly—so long as their *feelings* and *wishes* operate on their *judgments*, and their *practice* affects their *opinions*, it is hardly to be expected that all should *think* alike; and, of course, *not believing the same things*, that *all should mind the same things*. Still, what is matter of *fact*, may differ materially from what is matter of *obligation*. As candidates for eternity, sensible that what transpires here lays hold on an interminable future, we should fervently beseech God to lead us in the pathway of *truth and duty*; and if we would *know of any doctrine*, whether it be *of God*, our desires should be *sincere*, our purposes of obedience *thoroughly honest*, when *aiming to obtain that knowledge*. Inquiries made with such thoughts and emotions as Pilate and many others had, who came to Jesus when on earth, *questioning* him—made with the spirit of *curiosity* or *cavilling*, with *indifference* or *contempt*,—made with no *preparation* of heart to *receive the truth in the love of it*,—can hardly be expected to *terminate in correct results*. In our researches after principles, that shall harmonize with *God's will*, we should take heed not to *lean* with too much confidence to our own *understandings*, not to *trust* implicitly to our own *hearts*, and not to *obey*, or even *listen* to the *solicitations of unsanctified human nature*. *Self distrust*, a *vigilant fear* lest our deceitful hearts, our selfish desires, should lead us to adopt erroneous conclusions, to pursue wrong courses, should ever be cherished; especially as God, who knoweth us and all things infinitely better than we do, has told us in His word, that the unrenewed mind, the natural heart, is averse from the purity of His law, the holiness of His character, and the high claims of the gospel. This distrust should not be diminished by the declaration, that many things highly esteemed among men are abomination in the sight of God. Besides, has not the *painful experience of multitudes* testified, that such are the tendencies of human hearts, such the allurements of the world, and such the power and devices of the great adversary, that we had better be *over-cautious*, than heedless in any

degree—had better keep well *within* the boundary of right, than to approach with careless step, or a self confident spirit, ground that is doubtful? Has not that same experience shown, and do not we *well know*, that persons can often much more *easily* and *promptly* decide, that it is *not wrong* to *avoid* certain things, than that there is *no harm* in *performing* or *partaking* of those things? Say we these things as men? Saith not the bible, for the most part, the same also?* [Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. He that doubteth is condemned if he eat. Let every one be *fully persuaded* in his own mind. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss; ye ask that ye may consume it upon your pleasures. The heart is deceitful above all things. Lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy paths; but he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.]—&c. &c.

Rightly affected by these preliminary observations, let us fix our attention upon a *few* of God's solemn declarations, relative to our state of *probation*, the *soul's* high interests, and the *momentous consequences* to result from the things done in the body. Let us listen to them with a *teachable*, *prayerful* spirit, desiring in our inmost souls to ascertain what *the Lord would have us to do*, with respect to the subject to which our thoughts are now *especially called*. [The grace of God hath appeared, *TEACHING* us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live *soberly*, *righteously* and *godly* in *this present world*, to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, to set our affections on things above, and to abstain from all appearance of evil; *COMMANDING* us not to love the world, neither the things that are in it—not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the *renewing* of our minds; *declaring with startling solemnity*, that the minding of the flesh is death, that the friendship of the world is hostility to God, that fleshly lusts war against the soul, and that the lust of the flesh and of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of God; *exhibiting the facts and principles*, that if we, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live, if not we die—that we must crucify the flesh with its affections—that the pleasures of this life choke the word of truth, making it unfruitful—and that all, while in their natural state, *serve* divers lusts and pleasures, though the Holy Ghost saith to all, to us, *whatsoever you do*, in word or deed, *do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus, *do all* to the glory of God.]

With serious and honest minds let us *reflect* upon certain *other*

* 1. Corinthians, i. 10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, &c.

portions of the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, and *see and feel*, that *they teach us* that salvation is not so easily secured as many suppose, but that *powerful obstacles are to be surmounted, great dangers to be met, and a vast variety of difficulties to be encountered and overcome* in the narrow way to life eternal. [Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; thy right eye, pluck it out. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple. If any one will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me. No one can serve two masters. Fight the good fight of faith; flee youthful lusts; put on the whole armor of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit that ye may be able to stand. Work out your salvation with *fear and trembling*. The righteous *scarcely* are saved, &c. &c.]

Let us next endeavor to ascertain what light the *experience* of certain of our fellow creatures will afford, and to contemplate certain *facts* presented by the *workings of that Spirit*, who dictated the bible. We are *fully persuaded*, that persons who give much evidence that they are under the *convincing* influences of the Holy Ghost—that those who exhibit the clearest proofs that they have in exercise the *first love* mentioned and impliedly commended by our Saviour—and that those of a *maturer christian experience* who manifest the greatest devotion to Christ, the *highest spirituality* of mind, and the *strongest faith*—are *very generally*, if not always, *averse* from engaging in the amusement of dancing, as usually practised; they *instinctively shrink from it*, as incompatible with their safety, and *avoid* it as unfavorable to intimacy of communion with God, to living in all things to his glory. And it is a well known fact, that ridicule, flattery, sarcasm, and appeals to the vanity and pride of the heart, are often tried in vain to silence the convictions of the Divine Spirit, *notwithstanding* the hearts of those who are thus tempted are either unrenewed or sanctified but imperfectly. [We refer to a few passages here from the volume of inspiration: Keep *unspotted from the world*. Faith purifies the heart, works by love, and *overcomes the world*. Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.”]

Still further; so far as we have been able to judge from the records of the past, and what we have seen, felt and heard, there is a *conscience or moral sense* in the souls of a great majority of the *intelligent*, though unrenewed, part of every community, where the *light of divine truth* hath shined with *clearness*, which speaks unfavorably (*in the secret chambers of their minds*) of that amusement, as usually practised, and of those members of evangelical churches, who either partake of it themselves, or countenance others in participating in it. We well know, however, that certain principles in their nature are, at the same time,

soothed or pleased with the inconsistencies of Christ's friends; yet the *result* is that their estimate of such professors is lowered, and the religion of the gospel, the great salvation, is more readily neglected or undervalued by them.

We would now address you, who love the light, feel the plague of sin, and believe the doctrine of human depravity; who pray to be searched and led in the way everlasting,—and who are deeply sensible that the soul is of inconceivable worth, and that unless you are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, your ruin is certain;—And we would, with affectionate interest, ask whether the *words* of the Holy Spirit, which have been presented, relating to the necessity of crucifying the natural man—and those *others* which teach that the attainment of life eternal is *exceedingly difficult*—and those *actions* or *operations* of the *selfsame Spirit* to which your thoughts have been directed—and the ENLIGHTENED, UNBIASED dictates of the conscience given us of God—do not *unitedly* afford *such indications* of the *divine mind and will*, with respect to the amusement under consideration, as to leave *but little*, if *any*, doubt, that the Lord would have you avoid it, turn from it, and pass away? Do they not, in fact, *bear the conviction to your minds*, that the resolves passed by this church in October, 1838, are in harmony with the views of your Savior?

But some may say, "Why not give us a few *specific points*?" We will endeavor so to do, in the spirit of *kindness, and fervent good will*. We ask, then, does not the amusement of dancing, as usually practised, render *more prominent* those traits of the mind which dislike salutary checks and restraints? Does it not cherish an undue love of dress, display and admiration? Does it not nourish levity, vanity, pride, envy, and other feelings of the same character? Does it not employ time, absorb thought and emotion, *vastly disproportionate* to its value and importance? Does it not dissipate the thoughts and lead them and the soul farther from God? Does it not disqualify for intimate, solemn communion with the Father of Spirits? Does it not increase the obstacles to conversion and sanctification—foster the spirit of self indulgence, self pleasing, and strengthen the disposition to gratify the flesh, with its affections and desires? Does it not increase the natural aversion to the duties of religion, and the indisposition of human beings *now* to remember their Creator, *now* to *repent and turn to Him with their whole hearts*?

On the other side—Does it make things eternal appear like *realities*, and impress persons *more deeply* with the conviction that their souls are in jeopardy? Does it *naturally* give rise to profitable reflections upon the shortness and uncertainty of time, the certainty of death and retribution? Does it lead any to forego personal gratification, momentary pleasures, for the sake of promoting the everlasting good of others? Does it either form or enlarge *holy desires* after *spiritual blessings*? Does it either mor-

tify or crucify the natural distaste of the human heart to the holiness of God's law? Does it produce a tender regard for the *spiritual welfare* of weak believers, of such as are thoughtful and enquiring, and of those over whom a special influence is exerted? Is it attended with a dread of injuring the cause of the Redeemer, and the feelings of his friends? a dread of giving occasion to the enemies of the Gospel to speak reproachfully?

Till the first portion of these interrogatories can, for the most part be answered in the negative—and the second, for the most part, in the affirmative—and till *many others of similar import* can receive different replies from what we believe they can, it seems to us, that the resolutions on our records should remain unchanged,—should meet with a cordial reception in the heart, and be uniformly exemplified in the conduct of each professing christian.

We now ask permission to state, that we have a *very strong impression*, that the *same truths and facts* which point out the path of safety and duty to professing christians in general—the way in which *they* should go in order to advance in holiness, to avoid injuring their neighbors and win them to the service of Christ—establish the principle, that christian parents should employ all *suitable* instrumentalities, to restrain their children from engaging in that amusement, as it is *generally practised*. To this *they seem to us to be bound*, not merely by a regard to consistency, and to what has been presented, but also by the ties of natural affection and the obligations flowing from the relation they sustain to their offspring. Have not the *experience and observation* of thousands, and tens of thousands, of those who loved Zion, and labored diligently for the salvation of their descendants, *jointly declared*, that that amusement has a fascinating, exciting, absorbing power, a deleterious moral influence, which but few others possess? And can it be supposed that what is attended with danger to christian parents, will not affect unfavorably their children? that what impedes spiritual growth in the former, will not increase the obstacles to salvation in the latter? that what dampens or extinguishes holy emotions in the one, does not nourish aversion to holiness in the other? that what impairs the energy of spiritual life in the renewed, will not invigorate the sinful propensities in the unrenewed? that what is fraught with difficulty to the mature in age, can be entirely harmless and salutary for the young and inexperienced? Is there no need of extreme caution, lest such parents give the sanction of their authority to that, which rapidly augments devotedness to worldly pleasure? Can they be too vigilant and watchful, lest, directly or indirectly, by words or actions, or even by silence and indifference, they set the seal of their approbation to what is *eminently adapted to enchant* youthful minds, to engross their thoughts and feelings, and banish serious and anxious regard for the welfare of their immortal spirits?

Much more might be advanced, but we wish to conclude by merely saying, that if there be any fellowship of the Spirit, let us ponder these things in our hearts, earnestly praying to be taught of God, humbly yet firmly resolving to walk in the straight and narrow path, whatever self denial it may cost. May we, through grace, be enabled so to believe and walk as to please Christ, manifest his spirit, benefit our fellow creatures, please our neighbors for their good to edification, and thus save our own souls and the souls of those whose characters shall have been formed under our influence.

The foregoing Report, after being fully discussed, during several evenings, was adopted—Yeas 25, Nays 1.”*

Upon the acceptance of this report a spirited and protracted discussion arose. It was opposed by the minority on two grounds; first that this amusement was proper, on suitable occasions, for children and young people—and secondly that as there was an honest, conscientious difference of opinion upon the subject, the majority had no right to coerce the minority; and that this attempt so to do, was an unjustifiable usurpation of power.

Many gentlemen observing that the majority were bent upon this Ecclesiastical Legislation, staid away from the meetings in disgust.

There were others who, though coinciding with the views of the report, were unwilling to impose any yoke upon their brethren. But as it was considered important that the vote of acceptance should be as unanimous as possible, these last were told by the pastor, and Carleton Dole, the chairman of the committee, in presence of the church, that the acceptance of the report bound them to no particular course of action—that discipline for non conformity was by no means involved; and that it was merely an expression of the convictions of the church. With these pledges—pledges that were violated almost as soon as given, and forgotten as soon as their object was accomplished—the report was accepted in March 1840, by the nearly unanimous vote of the

* The above is a copy of this instrument as published by the church. The words in italics were thus marked by its author.

members present (comprising one half of the whole number.)

The report was considered so able and conclusive that it was ordered to be printed, so that every member of the church could have the privilege of reading it; and it was supposed that even if it failed to convince (a very remote contingency in their opinions) no one would have the moral courage to run counter to views put forth with all the solemnity of a Papal Bull.

CHAPTER II.

"He that telleth a tale to a fool, speaketh to one in a slumber: when he hath told his tale, he will say, what is the matter?"

Ecclesiasticus xxii, 8.

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Acts iv, 19.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

Heb. xiii, 9.

"Turn not to the right hand nor to the left." Prov. iv, 27.

"Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as without the warrant thereof, are devised by man out of BLIND ZEAL, or upon any PRETENCE OF GOOD INTENTION."

"CONFESSION OF FAITH."

After the publication of the above report, members, of course, had an opportunity of examining it; and the result was some diversity of opinion as to its meaning.—Several who voted for it said that it went farther than they intended. Others declared that though it seemed to make the amusement penal under all circumstances, yet that Mr. Dole had expressly stated that it was to have no application except to balls, assemblies, and great miscellaneous parties. The majority, however, boldly declared (what no person of ordinary discernment who had attended the discussions could doubt) that the report opposed dancing of every kind "except the old Jewish method of dancing in the open air in the day-time."*

* Perhaps they would not object to the common muster-field dancing, which comes up to this description.

If there were any who still doubted, their doubts were destined to be speedily and summarily removed.

It so happened that there was a sewing society called the "Winter-circle," composed of Misses between the ages of ten and fifteen, that met once a fortnight for the purpose of plying their needles for some benevolent object, in the afternoon, and of spending the evenings in plays, among which dancing was included. This Society on the eighth of April, within a month after the acceptance of the report, met at Mrs. Weston's; and the eyes of the pastor and of those who acted with him were upon her, to see if she could have the hardihood to allow this amusement and thus run counter to their published views.

The Society met and was allowed to dance as usual for a short time, Mrs. C. M. Fuller and D. C. Weston, a daughter and son of Mrs. W. playing, the one upon the piano and the other upon the violin.

This was a trying time with the church. If they passed by in silence, and without rebuke, this infraction of their report, they feared that after all their toil they would have accomplished nothing, and that others would be prompt to follow this example of disobedience. But on the other hand Mrs. Weston was one of the oldest members and a lady of distinguished piety,—and they feared the ridicule that would inevitably attach to the dragging her to the bar of the church for infringing not a Divine law, but one that had been enacted some few weeks before by men who could advance no just claim, that we are aware of, to infallibility.

It is somewhat uncertain whether common prudence or unbridled fanaticism would have ruled their counsel, had nothing else occurred to rouse their passions and stimulate them to the performance of what cool reflection must have rendered them ashamed.

CHAPTER III.

"Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land." Jer. iv, 5.

"Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

Is. lviii, 1.

"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." Ps. xx, 5.

"The private members or brotherhood are bound to take heed to their PRINCIPLES. Whether they relate to doctrines or practice, it is their duty to profess them openly and seriously, AND TO DEFEND THEM, WHEN THEY ARE ATTACKED. They thus escape the imputation of acting under hypocritical pretences, and exhibit a decision, which is becoming in all men, most of all in a follower of the crucified Redeemer." *RATIO DISCIPLINÆ.*

Two days after the meeting of the society, mentioned in the preceding chapter, the following pamphlet was published by D. C. WESTON, who was known at the time as the writer.

VINDICATION

Of the minority of the Congregational Church in the South Parish, Augusta, together with a review of the Report lately put forth by that body on the subject of Dancing. By a Member.

REPORT of a committee to the Congregational Church, in the South Parish, Augusta."

"This is the title of a new work, which has lately made its appearance under the patronage of a long established and respectable church. Had Solomon lived in the nineteenth century of the christian era, he certainly never would have made the remark, that there was "nothing new under the sun:" for setting aside the numerous discoveries and wonders of modern times, and looking at this document alone, we shall find enough to vindicate this age from a charge of having produced nothing new or strange. It is devoted entirely to the subject of Dancing; and lays down the duty of church members with regard to engaging themselves, or allowing their children to engage in this

amusement. After an elaborate discussion, the conclusion is somehow arrived at, that it is the duty of every disciple of Christ to set his face firmly against this sinful and (from the important notice it has received, perhaps we should add) *awful* practice.

And this is gravely put forth as the opinion of the church. As a member, however, of that church, and one who is well acquainted with the views of its members, we deem it a duty to ourself and several others, to say* that there are those belonging to it, who would blush to have it supposed that they countenanced, in the slightest degree, the conclusion, that dancing, at suitable times and places, is at all improper. We do not doubt the sincerity of most of those who have been active in getting up, accepting and publishing this Report. They were most of them, undoubtedly actuated by an honest zeal to promote the cause of religion; to rebuild walls which they supposed had been thrown down; to fix definite boundaries to the troubled sea of human passions, and say "thus far shalt thou come and no farther;" but alas for poor human nature! Integrity and honest christian zeal are insufficient to prevent us from advancing the most monstrous absurdities: and our holy religion has often received almost mortal wounds from friendly hands.

Before examining this Report, we wish to make some general remarks upon the subject of amusements, and the character of modern preaching so far as it bears upon it.

The ultra-ism of the present day, is more prominent perhaps in the christian church than elsewhere. It certainly has been carried to an extent which must excite the alarm of every true friend of Zion. Reason, common sense, the philosophy and physiology of mind and body, are entirely lost sight of, and the result is what might well be expected. Every thing is viewed through a distorted medium. A false perspective is introduced by which great and small objects are made to exchange places. The remark of our Saviour, ye "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," was never more applicable. The weightier matters of the law are forgotten entirely in the hue and cry which is raised after artificial delinquencies. Discretion is outstripped by zeal, and men often find themselves in the situation of the "Knight of the sorrowful countenance," who put his lance in rest, and charged furiously upon some innocent shepherds, returning from their labor with kettles upon their heads, mistaking them for some diabolical men-at-arms. It is but a few weeks since we listened to a discourse, from which the inference could be fairly drawn, that it would be better if christians never allowed their

*It is stated in a note at the conclusion of the "Report," that it was adopted—yeas 25—nay 1.

There are belonging to the church, fifty males and one hundred and thirty-one females.

countenances to relax into a smile; and that to laugh would be a flagrant outrage; forgetting that a smile is as involuntary as a tear; and that both are natural outward expressions of certain inward emotions. General Washington was alluded to, by way of quotation from another writer, as one who, during the revolution, was rarely, if ever, known to smile; and it was argued that if cares appertaining wholly to this world, were sufficient to keep a man always grave, that *a fortiori* the care of the salvation of an immortal soul ought to have a similar effect. We wanted to ask if General Washington did not also possess a soul, and whether the inference was not irresistible from the fact that *the cares of the revolution kept him from smiling*, that he would have been less grave under circumstances which usually fall to the lot of mortals. We do not expect a man, who is overwhelmed with private and public cares, to express in his face any other emotions than he feels. This would be giving a false stamp to the coin of the heart. It is perhaps an insult to common sense to reply to such reasoning.

There seems to have been commenced lately (we hope not extensively, although every minister we have listened to, has been in the alliance, holy we cannot call it) a series of attacks upon all the innocent amusements and gayeties of life. We have been told from the pulpit to "go to our closets and ask the Almighty what amusements he has in store for criminals on their way to execution." This beautiful world which God has made with every thing to delight the eye and the ear; in which there is so much enjoyment for every faculty of the soul, is represented as a prison-house where souls are confined previous to their final destruction.

All the graces and embellishments, which distinguish civilized from savage life, are represented as so many snares to cheat the soul into perdition; and we are exhorted to turn from them and flee away. The glorious gospel of the Son of God, which was sent as glad tidings of great joy to all people, is surrounded with clouds and thick darkness, and gloom of countenance and constant inward horror, seem to be declared most suitable for those who have a bright and cheerful hope that, by the mercy of God displayed through his Son, they shall after death be received into heavenly mansions. The state of the heart is judged by outward indifferent acts; and cheerfulness, good humor, and the practice of those social games handed down to us by our fathers, are regarded as denoting unpardonable levity.

Now, with all due respect to these gentlemen, we contend that amusements are as necessary as food, and that constant application to any subject, an unremitted, everlasting dwelling upon any particular routine of thought, is not only destructive to health, but prevents the greatest development of intellectual power. We must sometimes unstring the bow, relax our solemn and dig-

nified muscles, lay aside the cares and business of life and allow ourselves those social pleasures, which come, like heavenly messengers, to break in upon the tedium and monotony of life. Can it be wrong to reach forth the hand and pluck the flowers which Infinite Benevolence has strewn in our path? There is nothing in nature which always presents the same appearance. That, which is to-day a roaring flood, may to-morrow be a small and silent stream. The surface of the earth which is now covered with the snows of winter, will ere long put on the gay habiliments of spring; a dress so rich and variegated that one of its ornaments far surpasses all the glory of Solomon. The rain is followed by the sunshine. The zephyr gently breathes over the spot which has been torn and desolated by the blast of the whirlwind; and shall no relief come to man, the noblest of nature's works? Shall his path be beset with storms unvaried by the sunshine? Shall he be constantly overwhelmed with anxiety and business without a single hour of gayety to renovate his exhausted frame? Why has there been implanted in us an inclination for mirth and merriment, if it is *never* proper to indulge it?

Let it be recollected that we have no natural propensities, that may not receive a proper direction.

In the good old days of our fathers, many were the holydays on which frolics were allowed. The farmers had their "huskings." Christmas had its sleigh rides and its evening sports, which were kept up, until it was admitted even by the merriest of the party, that the "yule-log" was at last consumed. They had their family collections and their social gatherings around their own cheerful firesides; and beneath the delighted eye of grey-headed and christian parents, the laugh, the song and the dance went gayly round. Yet, in those days, the Sabbath was kept with a strictness, now but seldom seen. The Bible was a familiar book, and the young were carefully instructed in its sacred lore. The "school of good manners" was not then obsolete, and parents and superiors received from youth the respect which was their due. Nor do we find that the buoyant gayety, which burst forth on these joyous occasions, was in the least detrimental to their moral character? Let us quote from a fine writer,* one who has traveled both in his own and foreign countries; who has looked at man in every station and condition of life; and one whose observations have been carefully distilled through the alembic of a powerful intellect.

"Heaven has not ordained, man cannot endure, perpetual application either of the bodily or mental powers. Amusement and the cultivation of taste—the indulgence of our natural sensibility to what is beautiful in form, delightful in sound, and graceful in motion—was as truly designed to have its place in life as labor or study.

The expediency of such intervals for recreation has been acknowledged

* Orville Dewey.

and acted upon by all nations, and we are the first that have seemed to doubt it. Labor grows wearisome, and life grows dull, without amusement. The general health, the physical energy of a people, demand seasons of relaxation. It is an observation of philosophers and physicians, and it is too obvious indeed, to need their authority, that in proportion as public sports and games die out among a people, it loses flexibility of nerve, strength of muscle, and the power of adaptation to the various emergencies of war, danger, and difficulty, such as life is continually throwing in our path. And the mind, in like manner, is liable to become too rigid and contracted in the perpetual effort to grasp the same objects, the same studies. It is liable to want flexibility, to want expansion. It is likely to become the residence of low conceit, of rooted prejudice, of a stern creed and a sour bigotry. * * *

There is in human nature, and never to be rooted out of it, a want of excitement and exhilaration. The cares and labors of life often leave the mind dull, and when it is relieved from them—and it must be relieved—let this be remembered—there must be seasons of relief, and the question is how are these seasons to be filled up—when the mind enjoys relief from its occupations, I say, that relief must come in the shape of something cheering and exhilarating. The man cannot sit down dull and stupid—and he ought not. Now suppose that society provides him with no cheerful or attractive recreations, that society, in fact, frowns upon all amusements, that the importunate spirit in business, and the sanctimonious spirit in religion, and the supercilious spirit in fashion, all unite to discountenance popular sports and spectacles, and thus, that all cheap and free enjoyments, the hale, hearty, holy day recreations are out of use, and out of reach—what now will the man, set free from business or labor, be likely to do? He asks for relief and exhilaration, he asks for escape from his cares and anxieties; society in its arrangements offers him none; the tavern and the ale house propose to supply the want; what so likely as that he will resort to the tavern and the ale house? I have no doubt that one reason why our country fell into such unusual intemperance, was the want of simple, innocent, and authorized recreations in it.

The reason why the French are not intemperate, is not, as is commonly thought, that their only drink is wine. They have brandy, *eau-de-vie*, and it is every where drunk, but usually in moderation. And the reason of this is partly to be found, I believe, in their cheerfulness, in their sports and spectacles, in the resorts every where provided for simple entertainment. * * * For sports and spectacles, for music and dancing, for games and theatrical representations, there is a natural inclination; and an inclination, which, though often perverted, must be allowed, in the original elements, to be perfectly innocent—as innocent as the sportiveness of a child, or its love of beautiful colors and fine shows. ~ * * *

Domestic life, especially in our country towns, is in distressing need of relief and recreations. In the winter evenings there are four or five hours of leisure to be employed in some way. Suppose that two or three of these hours are spent in reading. That is very well, and it is very common too. But would it not be well followed with some recreation—games, or music and dancing? Would it not be better than to sink down into a dull stupor or go to sleep? There is too much eating and too much sleeping in this country, I verily believe, because there is too little amusement. Yes, and worse evils than these spring from the same cause. What would not happy homes do—happy evenings at home, with music, entertainment, cheerfulness, hilarity—to prevent many of our youth from straying into the paths of ruinous dissipation?"

We will also take an extract from a report published in the *London Morning Chronicle*, by the select committee on drunkenness.

"The want of agreeable occupation is the great cause of that beastly vice (intemperance) the disgrace of our nation. Savages are uniformly disposed to intoxication, which enables them to escape from the insufferable burden of listlessness. Drunkenness is the vice of people who are listless and betake themselves to the bottle for relief. * * * The individuals most addicted to drunkenness are not the gay and the cheerful—the men whose minds are occupied with any pursuit, whether study or diversion; but the heavy—the phlegmatic. The nations that cultivate music and dancing are comparatively sober. It was remarked during the Peninsular war, that the German soldiers who had a variety of amusements, were never drunk on duty; while the great difficulty was to keep an English soldier from the wine house. The Germans are naturally as heavy a people as ourselves—they were once notorious for their deep potations. They are now comparatively sober. In every village are to be found music clubs. The song and the dance are frequent. But no people are more careful or industrious than the Germans."^{*}

If any, in view of these facts, still maintain that amusements are sinful or even inexpedient for the Christian, we fear it is useless to attempt to introduce a single ray of light through the triple brass of impregnable prejudice. They think, we suppose, that a physical accompanies their moral change and that they are differently affected by the sun, air, food and exercise, from other men. To such we have nothing to say, deeming their case hopeless; and when we hear clergymen, who ought to be possessed of learning and intelligence, preaching against all amusements, as if every pastime was a sort of Pandora's box, and as if they firmly believed that, these abolished, all obstacle to the conversion of the world would be removed, we cannot help pitying the narrowness of intellect, the want of observation and reflection; the scantiness of ideas and unpardonable ignorance of the first principles of human nature which leads them to look at every sport, with a view to remote and contingent possibilities, and vague and impalpable tendencies. Yet their opinions are put forth, without any symptoms of hesitation. One is inclined to say, with Job, "no doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." "It is pleasant," as Lucretius says, "to get upon the very top of all philosophy, and look out upon the world, safe ourselves, from its dangers and alarms."

Giving, then, to these gentlemen all the deference to which their elevated position entitles them, we will regard it as proved that seasons of relaxation are necessary and proper.

^{*}If the committee upon dancing had been acquainted with the views of the committee upon drunkenness, perhaps they would have arrived at a different conclusion.

† Would they not be increased? "An idle brain is the devil's workshop." If innocent diversions are forbidden to the young, will they not become apt apprentices to the trade of that expert master workman?

What then shall our amusements be?

When it is remembered that our inclinations vary with our changing tastes, and accumulating years; that some find pleasure in what would be weariness to others, the difficulty of laying down rules is at once perceived. And he who makes the attempt, will find it so. We have heard of a disciple of Vulcan who said to his apprentices "let us leave off work and chop wood." No doubt the change from the close shop and swinging of the sledge, to the use of the axe in the open air, was pleasant. But what would be said if they prescribed the same sport for others?

Let each one follow his own inclinations, so long as he indulges in nothing criminal.

*"Indulge your taste. Some love the manly toils,
The tennis some, and some the graceful dance;
Others more hardy range the purple heath,
Or naked stubble, where from field to field
The sounding covies urge their lab'ring flight,
Eager amid the rising cloud to pour
The gun's unerring thunder; and there are
Whom still the meed of the green archer charms.
He chooses best whose labor entertains
His vacant fancy most; THE TOIL YOU HATE
FATIGUES YOU SOON, AND SCARCE IMPROVES YOUR LIMBS."**

As to the amusement of dancing, we have always regarded it as innocent and valuable, and shall hereafter give our reasons for this opinion. But what says the "Report"? It attempts to sustain the following resolutions.

First—"Resolved, That we consider public balls as exerting an influence decidedly unfavorable to the interests of religion, and an attendance upon them, by professing christians, as inconsistent with their covenant obligations."

Second—"Resolved, That since the amusement of dancing, as practiced under other circumstances, is almost invariably liable to some extent, to the same objections as public balls; very naturally leads to an attendance upon them, and will occasion when practiced by professing christians a measure of the same reproach—we consider it the duty of church members to refrain from that amusement entirely."

It also attempts "to establish the principle, that christian parents should employ all suitable instrumentalities to restrain their children from engaging in that amusement as it is generally practised."

It is not our intention to go at all into the merits of the first resolution, as it is uncalled for; members of "Orthodox churches" not being in the habit of attending "public balls."

With regard to the second resolution, and the establishment of the above "principle," we have somewhat to say. It will be

* Dr Armstrong's "Art of preserving health."

perceived, that this resolution declares it to be the duty of church members, *never* to join in the dance, whatever the occasion—whether by your own fire side or in the social circle, where you behold loved and familiar faces, and spend a few brief hours in keeping your “friendship in good repair;” or at the annual family gatherings, when the absent ones return, perchance from beyond the sea, when pleasure beams from every eye, and the sound of gladness is on every tongue,—the church has solemnly given forth to the public, that they consider it the duty of the christian *never* to engage in the dance.

We lament exceedingly that they should have arrived at such a conclusion; and still more, that they should have thus announced it to the world, as we think it calculated to do vast injury to that cause which we trust we all have at heart; and to cast a reproach upon many christians and highly valuable members of society.

In making the remarks we are about to offer, we are actuated by no unfriendly feelings to those who have advanced these opinions. On the contrary we have for many of them the highest regard: but we have been arraigned before the public, and cannot permit judgment to go against us by default.

The first five pages, and a part of the sixth, of the “Report,” [5th, 6th and a part of the 7th of this vol.] are taken up in laying down general, valuable cautions as to how we should approach any question of duty—then follow certain quotations from scripture “relating to the necessity of crucifying the natural man,” and which “teach that the attainment of life eternal, is exceedingly difficult.”

Then the example of “mature” christians is appealed to—then the “great majority of the intelligent though unrenewed part of every community, where the light of divine truth hath shined with clearness,” are represented as regarding the conduct of christians, who engage in this amusement, as inconsistent.

Then follow two sets of questions, the first of which are all answered in the affirmative, and the second in the negative, without its having been thought necessary to advance anything more convincing than their simple yea and nay.

Having thus thrown so much light upon the subject as “to leave but little, if any, doubt,” that dancing, upon any occasion, is attended with the most disastrous and dangerous results to our immortal welfare, it goes on to infer, that “consistency” and “natural affection” should induce parents to restrain their children from it; “that, what is fraught with difficulty to the mature in age,” cannot “be entirely harmless and salutary to the young and inexperienced.” In the concluding sentence, it is declared that “much more might be advanced.”

We will reply in detail to these positions and assertions. All are aware of the danger of giving any particular portion of the

Bible undue prominence. If this is done, our views are distorted, and wrong impressions received. This remark will be found eminently valuable, applied to the passages cited in the "Report." When an attempt is made to prove dancing sinful, by quoting texts which call upon us "to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," we very naturally inquire what the Apostle meant by these expressions.

The "Report," in assuming that dancing was a "fleshly lust," begged the question. Let the Apostle explain his own meaning. Gal. 5th; 19th, 20th, 21st; "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like.*" Thus we see, that "soberly, righteously," &c. are put in opposition to abominable vices; and have no bearing whatever upon dancing or any other amusement properly so called. Might not a hint be taken from Paul's example, to cease these attacks upon harmless games and turn attention to real vices. If it is supposed that we are rendered more fit for heaven by denying ourselves all innocent gratifications, it is but advancing one step farther, to render it more sure by self inflicted torture. Deluded christians have, ere now, howled responsive to their own blows, believing that every groan here, would become a song hereafter.

Neither, it is conceived, are such quotations as "work out your salvation with *fear and trembling*"—the righteous scarcely are saved," &c. &c., any more applicable to this subject. We know that portions of Scripture may be selected, of very solemn import, which teach us the vanity of all sublunary things; and the mind, impressed with their worthlessness, longs to flee to the deserts and mountains, there to spend every waking moment in devotion. We may be brought to consider, not only every recreation, but even the business of life, as hindrances on our way. An examination of other portions of the Bible (which in due time we shall make) would lead us to adopt more rational views. For the present we remark, that, having shown recreations to be useful and essential, they cannot of course, be classed with those "powerful obstacles"† and "great dangers" and that "vast variety of difficulties," spoken of, in the "Report," as standing in the path to heaven; for whatever is necessary, cannot

* These are strong expressions, inculcating the necessity of diligent self examination; and he, whose mind is healthy, cheerful, and active, is better fitted for the task, than he, whose soul is full of morbid melancholy, gloom, and despondency.

† Report, page 7.

have a bad effect upon the heart. No man would think of interrupting a game of ball, or blindman's buff, by saying there were "great obstacles" in the way to heaven; that the "righteous scarcely are saved"—"work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Some moral distinction must then be pointed out between dancing and other amusements. Unless some peculiarly bad tendencies are fastened upon it, this talk about "obstacles," "dangers," and "difficulties," falls pointless upon the ear of the reflecting.

By what mental process, all the solemn passages of the Bible are made to bear upon *this* amusement, and upon no other, is difficult to conceive.

We come now to the assertion, that "those of a maturer christian experience, who manifest the greatest devotion to Christ, the highest spirituality of mind, and the strongest faith," are, "very generally, if not always, averse from engaging in this amusement."

Dancing is confined principally to the young. Now if with "maturer experience," is connected an age beyond the period of youth, this is fully explained. Their inclination to engage in the dance has ceased; and no other motive except want of inclination should be attributed to them. The assertion that they refrain from *what they have no taste for*, because they would be so fascinated with it as to be unfit for "communion with God," carries with it but little weight; so that the fact that few dancers are found between the ages of thirty and seventy proves nothing.

If years are not necessary for "maturer christian experience," and it is meant to be asserted that devoted young christians are generally "averse" to this amusement, proof of the fact is necessary. We know many who are not "averse" to the dance, and are only kept from it on suitable occasions by the frowns of their spiritual guides.

We pass now to the inference, drawn from the assertion, that the characters of those christians who engage in this "amusement as usually practised,"* are lowered in the estimation of "a great majority of the intelligent, though unrenewed part of the community." This we believe to be a grand mistake. The world has severer tests by which to try the character, than opinions or practice upon dancing. It is more keen sighted than is generally supposed. It observes, compares, examines, and values at their true worth those cheap displays of zeal manifested by those who cry out against dancing, after that age when it ceases to be agree-

* The dancing, intended by this expression, is the social dance at private houses, at suitable hours, and generally to the music of the piano, played by one of the guests or a member of the family, though the aid of the violin is sometimes called in.

able. Does not this and things of a similar character tend to rouse their suspicions? They know very well that the position of the muscles of the face, or of the limbs; the direction of the eyes; a solemn manner of speaking; a "measured step and slow," have nothing to do with the state of the heart.* In former times, they may have been deceived: But at the present day, an ostrich escapes as well the eyes of his pursuers, by hiding his head in the sand, as they, the scrutiny of the world, by such means.

The fact that the *charge* of inconsistency is sometimes made, is very readily explained. It is well known that the world judges christians, according to the general standard furnished by the oracles and expounders of their faith. Now if these last have declared that dancing is sinful, either in itself or its tendencies, what wonder that the world should notice what they have been taught to suppose, is an infraction of the creed! They merely use the *argumentum ad hominem*, and to draw an inference therefrom, unfavorable to this amusement, is absurd. It is like putting a piece of scandal in motion, and then proving it from its repetition by those whom it has reached; or hallooing a certain charge in some hilly region, and being convinced of its truth, by the returning echoes. Suppose an ecclesiastical Bull was issued declaring "smiling unsuitable for this vale of tears, and inconsistent with the christian character." The world, amused "in the secret chambers of their minds" would carefully watch, and charge with "inconsistency" any disciple of Christ, who should venture to exhibit in his face, the sunshine of a cheerful heart. The promulgators of the Bull against smiling, could maintain their position, so far as this argument is concerned, equally well with those who have issued this against dancing; and congratulate themselves equally well on their spiritual sagacity, while at the same time they wounded the cause of religion.

Hence, the responsibility of those who dogmatically decide what is, or is not, taught by christianity, either as to opinions or practice, is tremendous. It may be easy for individuals "to keep well within the boundary of right" and to "easily and promptly decide that it is not wrong to avoid certain things;"† but when rules are furnished for others, the path of safety is not so obvious. There is always danger from stupidity, ignorance and fanaticism. A way faring man, though a fool, may not err as to his own duty, though he would by no means answer for a general oracle. *That one may refrain from dancing without sin* is true. To declare

* All this we know is perfectly compatible with great purity of heart; "yet the result is that their estimate of such professors is lowered, and the religion of the gospel, the great salvation, is more readily neglected or undervalued by them."

† Report, page 7.

this amusement sinful, is a different affair. If this distinction was kept in mind, a good deal of confusion of ideas would be avoided; and much less injury done.

That man, who publicly tacks to religion anything repugnant to reason and common sense, places a pointed weapon in the hands of its enemies; and one which is sure to be used *con amore*.

Divines once drew a system of Astronomy from the Bible, and dogmatically asserted that to overthrow that system would falsify the word of God. And he who asserted that the earth was not flat; that it turned on its axis daily, and that the sun and stars were stationary, was seized by the Inquisition and obliged, on his bended knees, to renounce his "abominable heresy." But the sun-light of truth was too powerful for the mists of priest-craft. The true theory was established; and infidels, taking christians at their word, declared the Bible to be overthrown.

In this case, the danger is the same. If the common sense of mankind teaches that dancing is an innocent recreation, and it is asserted that religion forbids it, will not that religion be looked upon with distrust? And if so, does it not become a duty to "*try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets, are gone out into the world*"? to examine this "new light," and see whether it be not an ignis-fatuus to lead us from the path of safety, into bogs and quagmires? We know that the performance of this duty will sometimes call down a torrent of pulpit declamation; that motives will be freely criticised and honesty doubted. But Christ has said—"when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad."

We now come to those questions in the "Report," which are so promptly disposed of. Though not calling for a reply, they shall receive a passing notice.

It is asked if dancing "does not cherish an undue love of dress, display and admiration;" "nourish levity, vanity, pride, envy, waste time, dissipate the thoughts," &c. &c. That it may have these effects is true. That it is *particularly* chargeable with them, cannot be maintained. "The sages of antiquity regarded dancing as a useful bodily exercise, an inoffensive relaxation, and as an efficacious preservative against the disorders of the mind. When the body is in motion the mind reposes itself."*

The assertion that this amusement may, and sometimes does, excite improper emotions, if true, is as true with regard to everything. Can any position in life be pointed out in which the character is not tried? Wherever we are, we are surrounded with temptations and trials which are necessary to a probationary state. A deadly poison may be extracted from the flower which,

* Rees' Encyclopedia.

to the industrious bee, is a fountain of sweetness. We read the Bible and are better or worse for the perusal. The preaching of the gospel may be to some a "savour of death unto death." The house of God may become an arena for the exhibition of a "love of dress, display and admiration." All the turkey-cock propensities of our nature may be shown in the pulpit, and in the prayer-meeting, but the fault is in the heart. Let this be pure, and "all things are pure;" but if corrupt, it will draw disease and death from even that which is holy.

We give as a curiosity, the second set of questions entire. They are called "specific points," and are made tests of amusements.

"Does it make things eternal appear like *realities*, and impress persons *more deeply* with the conviction that their souls are in jeopardy? Does it *naturally* give rise to profitable reflections upon the shortness and uncertainty of time, the certainty of death and retribution? Does it lead any to forego personal gratification, momentary pleasures, for the sake of promoting the everlasting good of others? Does it either form or enlarge *holy desires* after *spiritual blessings*? Does it either mortify or crucify the natural distaste of the human heart to the holiness of God's law? Does it produce a tender regard for the *spiritual welfare* of weak believers, of such as are thoughtful and enquiring, and of those over whom a special influence is exerted? Is it attended with a dread of injuring the cause of the Redeemer, and the feelings of his friends? a dread of giving occasion to the enemies of the Gospel to speak reproachfully?"

Where can a sport be found, of sufficient solemnity, to stand before these searching tests?—tests as powerful as the philosopher's stone, though having the direct contrary effect; for, instead of turning every thing to gold, they would turn the fine gold of life to dross. All known games would go down in one common crash together before this tremendous battery. We were not before aware that amusements were direct means of grace. We knew that they cleared the mind of morbid fancies, improved its tone, and strengthened us for the performance of duty; but were not apprised that this use could be made of them.

If there are any which have the direct effect to "impress persons more deeply with the conviction that their souls are in jeopardy," and which "naturally give rise to profitable reflections upon the shortness and uncertainty of time, the certainty of death and retribution," ought they not to be introduced, as speedily as possible, into heathen countries, and into our churches, to aid the efforts of missionaries and clergymen who are laboring to impress the same views upon the mind.

Here we are gravely told that unless dancing impresses us "*more deeply* with the conviction" that our "souls are in jeopardy," it *never* must be practised. If, in dancing, our views of eternal things remain unaltered for the better or worse, that is insufficient. Unless we are impressed by it "*MORE DEEPLY*" upon these subjects, it must be refrained from entirely.

There is an objection to dancing, incidentally touched upon in the "Report," though not fully presented, which is commonly the great argument addressed to the christian.

It is said that it "offends" the consciences of our christian brethren; and the remark of Paul, "*if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,*" is usually quoted.

There is, perhaps, no passage which has been more perverted than this. Paul never inculcated the duty that we must abandon a course we suppose right, merely because others profess themselves "grieved" by it. That would strike at the root of all reform. Luther "*grieved*" the whole christian world when he exposed the absurdities of the Catholic religion, and broke his vow of celibacy. We must give up tea, coffee, every luxury of life, abandon the cultivation of the arts, and allow the armed heel of the invader to trample the unresisting land. In short, on this construction, the conduct of every christian is dependent, not on his own, but on the consciences of others.

We might also fairly turn the argument upon those who advance it, by saying that the consciences of many christians were "grieved" by all this outcry against an innocent amusement, and asking those who make it to cease that clamor which gives so much "*offence*" to their christian brethren.

"To offend," means *to cause to stumble*; and a careful examination of 1 Cor. chap. 8, shows that it can have no application to the case of dancing.

The Gentiles were in the habit of offering sacrifices to idols, and feasting in their temples, upon the victims: but when they came out of darkness into the "marvellous light" of the gospel, they were, many of them, fully divested of all their ancient prejudices. They knew that an idol was "*nothing in the world,*" and could eat the flesh of the slain animal without a particle of respect for the idol. But there were those who could not so easily lay aside superstitions, believed in from their earliest years, who still retained "*some conscience of the idol,*" and, who when they partook of this meat, "*ate it as a thing offered unto an idol.*" The reason then why Paul would not partake, was, that although he could eat without sin, some weak brother might, by his example, be led into the commission of idolatry. "*For,*" says he, "*if any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak, be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?*"

Let it be recollected that there is no pretence that eating the meat would have a bad effect upon Paul's own heart. Before, then, his injunction can be applied, in the manner intended, to dancing, two things must be admitted. First, that it has no bad effects upon the hearts of those who join in it. Secondly, that there are some "weak" persons who will be "emboldened" to

dance, while at the same time, they are violating their darkened consciences. For if it is contended that dancing has a bad effect on *every* one; and those opposed to it, see and understand these bad effects fully, then the consciences of these last are the enlightened ones, and those of the dancers "weak."

If now the position is abandoned that dancing has a bad effect upon our own hearts, and we are requested to abstain because our example may lead those, who *imagine* it sinful, into acting against their consciences, we answer,

First—that those who think it sinful are too old to have any relish for it, and are, therefore, not likely to violate both their inclinations and consciences.

Second—if not too old, their dogmatism with regard to this amusement is such, that there is no danger of any one's example leading them to violate convictions of duty so clear that they have not hesitated to publish them to the world. We should as soon think of seeing a Pharisee sit down to eat with publicans and sinners.

One remark farther. There are a good many consciences in the world besides those which demand such extraordinary concessions. Paul has told us to "*give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.*" Now if it is a fact (and we appeal to the experience of all whether it is not) that sensible young men and women are led to sneer at religion, because many of its professors affirm that it forbids an amusement which their common sense tells them is innocent, has not a stumbling block been placed in their path? And, according to the same St. Paul, ought not every christian, who sees the injury, do all he can to remedy it? Is not the sin, of keeping one soul from Christ by our superstitions and follies, greater than that of causing grief, which endureth for a little season, to the hearts of many christians?

Thus have we examined the arguments and assertions of this "Report"; having forbore only to remark upon the fact stated that those who are in a state of horror from the convictions of sin, and those who are in the first extacies of being relieved from that state by a hope of mercy, are "averse from engaging" in the dance—because these are unnatural states of the mind, generally of short duration.

Such is this flood of light that has been poured upon this amusement, so as to leave "but little, if any doubt, that the Lord would have you avoid it, turn from it, and pass away."* That is to say, we suppose, that dancing is to be the signal of flying from the social circle.

Having established this, beyond a reasonable doubt, the inference is drawn that those parents are destitute of "natural affec-

* Report, page 9.

tion," who refuse to restrain their children from a recreation which the founders of this church, and its former respected pastor looked upon without a frown.*

We have heard it said that a Hindoo mother who threw her child to the crocodile, was destitute of "natural affection," but have always supposed that a christian mother might safely be trusted with the care of her offspring.†

So far as the "Report" is concerned, we might rest our case here. But there are other objections, frequently made use of, which we wish to meet.

We have heard of those who looked favorably upon dancing, having been silenced by the question, "How would the apostle Paul have looked dancing?" It may not be credited that one should reason in this way, but a gentlemen who had often done so, with distinguished success, once addressed the same query to us. We answered it, however, in the New England style, by putting another—to wit—"How would St. Paul have looked playing a game of blind-man's-buff—an amusement that you admit to be innocent?"

We often hear it said that christians should refrain from dancing, because they are likely to carry it to *excess*. Is this true? We appeal to the experience of every one, for confirmation of our assertion, when we say that christians, however young, are not in the habit of carrying this amusement to excess; and yet we are told, in the "Report," that it "is attended with danger to christian parents; that it is fraught with difficulty to the mature in age." We never heard such positions advanced before. It might very plausibly be asserted, were it not for stubborn facts, that the young christian would be likely to be injured by it: but was it ever maintained before, that "christian parents" and the

* It is said to be the duty of parents to restrain their children from dancing as "generally practiced." This refers to dancing under those "other circumstances" mentioned in the second resolution, and operates as a restraint on every occasion. The reasoning of the Report is, that whatever "is attended with danger to christian parents," will "affect unfavorably their children." The danger to children is co-extensive with that to parents; and as the latter must "refrain from that amusement *entirely*," it follows that children must be made to refrain to the same extent. After leaving "but little if any doubt," that dancing is a "fleshy lust," and that a christian can *never* be guilty of it, under any circumstances without reproach, this attempt to render the "Report" less absurd, by once or twice saying, as "usually" or "generally practiced," only renders it more so. It is like a direction to parents to restrain their children from house breaking, as "usually practiced" in our large towns.

† The church passed no resolution, as to parents, but that makes no difference. It has brought all the real power it possesses to bear upon them. Churches have not, now, any implements of bodily torture, and church discipline is but a moral force which could add nothing, in this case, to that already employed.

"mature in age" were likely to be carried away with it. What brought the South parish church to such a conclusion? They certainly find nothing to support it in this town; and, for fear that a wrong impression may go abroad, from these unusual proceedings, we beg leave to state that "christian parents," and the "mature in age," in this town, are generally very sober, respectable people. If there are any exceptions, they are not to be found among the dancers.

Is it objected that the world abuses this amusement, and that, therefore, the christian should not countenance it?

Would public balls cease, if christians left off dancing occasionally by their own fire sides? The world is always apt to use in an improper manner, that which may be rightly enjoyed. Painting may be prostituted to the vilest purposes. But, shall the art, which has done so much to illustrate sacred history, be, on this account, abandoned?

Music and song lend their aid to scenes of the wildest revelry: But shall the pealing anthem, for this reason, be hushed; and the voice of melody never be heard in our dwellings?

The christian was intended to be an example and a light to those around him; to show that all the bounties of a kind Providence, may be enjoyed in moderation and without sin, and that all our natural instincts and inclinations may take a proper direction.

It is said there is a fascination about dancing which no other amusement possesses.

Much of this may be accounted for, on the ground of ecclesiastical persecution. Let any game be forbidden, and public attention will be turned to it, as that of Fatima was to the proscribed room in the castle of Blue-beard. If dancing was more frequent; if the frowns of christians upon it, gave place to smiles; if parents generally looked on with approbation, and the consciences of those who danced were not hardened by any attempts to convince them that they sinned in so doing—attempts which sometimes create a sense of guilt, and always a spirit of defiance,—we should hear less of the fascination complained of.

Is it not a fact that those children, who are allowed to dance, are less liable to carry it to excess, and set a lower value upon it, than those who are not? That these last make themselves ample amends for their deprivation, when age has freed them from parental control? In them, the stream which would have flowed naturally, within its proper banks, impeded by the doubts and unreasonable, though kindly meant objections of parents, has gathered to a mighty head.

Thus far, we have offered some views on the necessity of recreations, and have endeavored to reply to objections, advanced both in public and private, to that of dancing. We shall now turn to the other side of the question, and attempt to show that

those christians who regard it with a favorable eye, can give some foundation for their opinions besides vague surmises.

We say, then, that we know of no amusement, so well calculated to produce good results, as music and dancing,—as practised under those “other circumstances” mentioned in the second resolution. It creates healthful, cheerful spirits, and gives an elasticity of limb, and grace of movement, rarely acquired without its aid.

The more agreeable an amusement, the better will be its effects upon the mental and physical constitution. That this possesses this quality, in a high degree, is certain; connected as it is with inspiring sounds, and the exercise of the brightest and best feelings of our nature—the social affections.

Music is always delightful; and whether the strain be peaceful or warlike, joyous or sorrowful, patriotic or devotional, our souls are borne along on the melodious current. We read, even, of evil spirits leaving the breast of Saul, when the lyre was skillfully touched by the son of Jesse. What those evil spirits were—whether they were actual devils, as some suppose, or meant to signify a morbid melancholy, or a morose, savage, soured disposition,—is of no consequence. Whatever they were,—devils or evil emotions—they fled before the enlivening strain.

Now our Maker has so constituted us, that our muscles, almost involuntarily move to the sound of musical instruments. This natural desire to follow up the sound with some motion of the body—when carried into execution, after suitable instruction,—is called dancing, though the march of the military, with banners streaming, and “the trumpet in the ear,” is but a dance of a simpler kind.

Now there is a proper use for all natural inclinations. There is no desire implanted in the heart, which, when properly directed, may not be gratified; and that, too, with good results, as in the present case.

So beneficial are the effects of music and dancing, that it is even introduced into Insane hospitals with great good to their unhappy inmates.

Compared with other amusements, how much superior in every respect! How quiet, how beautifully adapted to social life! How quickly is every unpleasant feeling, every trivial vexation and petty animosity, melted away before its genial influence! Every boisterous sound is hushed—slander dies unspoken on the tongue, and every eye sparkles with delight.

It has the sanction of every nation, age and clime. It is supported by our natural instincts, and by the philosophy of our physical and mental nature. It violates no principle of religion or sentiment of propriety. Nay, it can be amply supported from the Bible itself—that book which is so often misrepresented and abused.

It is not true that the Bible is full of gloom and despondency. To the christian, it is full of life and hope, and peace and joy. It is wide as our wants, and suited to every feeling and condition in life. In joy and affliction, in hope and despair, we can find refreshment here.

We shall find, too, that the God of nature has implanted no propensities, which the God of revelation has forbidden us to gratify.

We find that the Jews had provided for them, by Him who best understood their wants, a large number of festivals, which were kept with great rejoicing. The timbrel and pipe, and the voice of those that made merry were heard on these occasions, and the dance was not forgotten.

Is it said these were occasions of thanksgiving? So they were—but they were thanksgivings of cheerful and happy hearts, the homage which is always paid by him who innocently enjoys the profusion of the bounties of Providence. A smile was on every face, and joyful emotion in every heart. Each grasped the hand of his friend. The cup, flowing with new wine, was freely circulated, and hilarity and mirth abounded.

They had, we know, their "solemn feasts." But these were distinct from those we have mentioned. The term "solemn," was applied to distinguish them from those that were not so, and the use of it clearly shows that the others were of a contrary character.

To prove that merriment may, on suitable occasions, be innocently indulged, and also that dancing is countenanced by the Bible, we cite the following passages.

In order, however, that there may be no mistake as to the class of feelings meant by the word "merry," we cite Ec. 10, 19, "*Wine maketh merry*—Jud. 9, 27, *And they went out into their fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes and made merry*—Ruth 3, 7, *When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry*—Judg. 16, 25, (the Philistines made a great feast,) *And it came to pass when their hearts were merry, that they said let us call for Sampson that he may make us sport.*"

"Merry," then, had the same meaning which we attach to it. Let us see if any pious people indulged in it without rebuke. Gen. 43, 34, "*But Benjamin's mess was five times as great as theirs, and they drank and were merry with him,*" (that is, with Joseph, a man whose firmness and integrity in every trial was fully manifested.) 2d Chron. 7, 10, "*And on the 3d and 20th day of the 7th month, he (Solomon) sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart : for the goodness that the Lord had*

* It is amusing sometimes to hear people say there is something "very anti-devotional in dancing," and then, when dancing is mentioned in the Bible, to assert that it was used for the very purpose of devotion.

shown unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people." (This was after the building of the Temple.) Ec. 9, 7, "*Go thy way: eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.*"

Here they were merry; and the reason given for it is remarkable, when taken in connection with the "Report," which seems to inculcate the doctrine that the christian must always live in a state of "fear and trembling." Prov. 15, 13, "*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken*—Prov. 15, 15, *All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he that is of a merry heart, hath a continual feast*—Prov. 17, 22, *A merry heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones*—1st Kings, 4, 20, *Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea shore in multitude; eating and drinking and making merry*"—"when" (in the following verse,) "*Judah and Israel dwelt SAFELY*"—(mark the word)—"*every man under his vine and fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba all the days of Solomon*"; who possessed, (27th verse) "*wisdom and understanding and largeness of heart*. Isaiah 24, 7, *The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth; all the merry hearted do sigh*"—(8th verse,) *The mirth of tabrets ceaseth; the voice of them that rejoice endeth: the joy of the harp ceaseth.*" These were signs that the judgments of God were abroad in the earth. Jer. 30, 18, "*I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents and have mercy on his dwelling places;*" and then, (verse 19,) "*out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry.*"

[We cannot help, in this connection, giving two parallel passages. Ec. 10, 19, "*A feast was made for laughter*—1st Cor. 10, 27, *If any of them, that believe not, bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience sake.*"]

Jer. 31, 4, "*Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; thou shalt be again adorned with thy tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry.* Ec. 3d, 4th, (There is) *a time to mourn and a time to dance*—Psalms 30, 11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing*—Jer. 31, 13, *Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow*—1st Sam. 18, 6 and 7, *And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music, and the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.*"

If an Armada, destined for the subjugation of this country,

should be met and conquered by our own gallant ships, and in the universal outbreak of joy, the sound of music and dancing should be every where heard in the relieved land, it would be a case similar to that here given. We read however, of no rebuke upon this natural expression of feeling, and the only angry man was Saul, who conceived his prowess disparaged.

Is the New Testament silent upon this subject? * In the 15th chapter of St. Luke, we have the history of a younger son, who left a kind and good father's roof—because he could there find no opportunity of indulging the evil propensities of his nature—and wasted his substance upon harlots, and in riotous living: but in his poverty and distress, his heart yearned for his distant home. He returns, is penitent, and is forgiven. The father orders the fatted calf to be killed, and they ate and began to make "merry." "*Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing;*" and being informed of the circumstances, "*He was angry and would not go in;*" "*therefore came his father out and entreated him,*" saying, "*It was meet that we should make merry and be glad.*" Now there would be an incongruity in the parable, had there been any thing improper in this music and dancing; for if it was calculated to "dissipate the thoughts and lead the soul farther from God," we must suppose the prodigal son had reached a dangerous atmosphere; and that the elder son, who remained without, soured and sullen, was the only christian there.

Does not the Bible, then, triumphantly sustain our positions? We make one extract more, from *Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan.

"Now when Feeble-mind and Ready-to-halt saw that it was the head of Giant Despair indeed, they were very jocund and merry. Now Christiana, if need was, could play upon the viol, and her daughter Mercy upon the lute; so since they were so merrily disposed, she played them a lesson, and Ready-to-halt would dance. So he took Despondency's daughter, named Much-afraid, by the hand, and to dancing they went in the road. True he could not dance without one crutch in his hand; but I promise you he footed it well: also the girl was to be commended for she answered the music handsomely."

The head was erected upon a pole, and upon a marble stone beneath it were written some verses which conclude as follows,

"This head also when doubting cripples dance
Doth show from fears, they have deliverance."

* Any one who will consult Goodrich's "religious ceremonies and customs," will find that the Jews celebrated their marriages with great rejoicings; that the eight days preceding the marriage are "usually grand days," during which "the betrothed couple and their friends laugh, sing, dance, and cast away care."

It will be recollected that the first miracle of our Saviour was performed at a wedding.

Now we know very well that this is but a fable and that some leading points only are meant to be illustrated ; but some appropriateness must be observed in the filling up ; and it was evidently Bunyan's opinion that dancing, on joyful occasions, was proper ; for he relates this as a very innocent affair, and we do not read that these good people were, by this dance, at all impeded on their way to the Celestial city.*

On a whole view of the subject, is not this public declaration that christians should "refrain from that amusement entirely," and that they "should employ all suitable instrumentalities to restrain their children," calculated to injure "the cause of the Redeemer, and the feelings of his friends," and give "occasion to the enemies of the gospel to speak reproachfully"? Is it not an unjustifiable attack upon the character of those christians,† whose opinions we have endeavored to express?

Has there been sufficient ground for charging those among 'hem who are parents, with violating "ties of natural affection and the obligations flowing from the relation they sustain to their offspring"? Are there not many things upon which pious zeal could be displayed to more advantage? Or are all sins rooted out from among us, and is this the last citadel of the enemy? Does it not have a tendency to make our religion consist, principally, in abstinence from immaterial things, to the dangerous neglect of our hearts? Is it not calculated to stir up divisions, create heart burnings and jealousies,‡ which prevent harmonious action in legitimate channels? Will it not have the direct effect to alienate the hearts of the young from a religion that deprives them of a favorite pastime.

When we recollect that youth is the period of enjoyment, which is fast fleeting away ; that we are permitted to "rejoice in our youth"—only keeping in mind that there is a judgment hereafter, and that pleasures should be indulged in moderation—when we remember that ebullition of spirits (which demands, and must have objects upon which to vent itself,) that rarely outlives the period of youth—that those countenances which now beam with pleasure and animation, will, ere long, be clouded

*We refer also to the quotations from Orville Dewey and the London Morning Chronicle—to be found on the 17th, 18th and 19th pages.

† Where a person joins a church that has an article against dancing, the case is different. The founders of this society never contemplated such an infringement of private liberty. They looked with favor upon this amusement, and a considerable portion of the church have always allowed their children to dance, and have occasionally mingled in it themselves in the family circle ; and till the second resolution was passed, they never supposed that they infringed, by so doing, any law, human or divine.

‡ There are 43 married women belonging to the church, whose husbands are not professors.

with the troubles and cares of life—we should hesitate long before we placed any recreation beyond their reach.

So far as it affects young children, it is peculiarly obnoxious. Restraint exaggerates the pleasure in their estimation, and creates a morbid desire to partake of it; produces a feeling of general discontent, and envy towards their more favored companions, and renders moral improvement more difficult. When they return satisfied from their gambols on the green—from coasting down the hills which God has raised for them, or from sporting in the dance with their loved playmates, do they not more readily receive religious instruction than those whose animal spirits have no such outlets?

In conclusion, and in behalf of the minority, we say that we consider the present position of the "South Parish Church," a false position; that, in this attempt to coerce its members, it is guilty of palpable injustice, and is acting in opposition to scriptural authority. That it has power in certain cases, we admit. If any of its members become slanderers, or tale bearers, or "busy bodies" in other men's matters; or liars, or cheats, or swindlers; or live in the commission of any open, unrepented sin, it is not only the right, but the duty of the church, to purge out the "unclean thing." But we deny its authority to interfere in any matter of practice, about which there is *an honest difference of opinion*.

A few illustrations will show this position to be correct. For instance—

The church has no right to interfere with a person's dress; to pry into and control the household expenses of families, and see that they do not exceed what they may please to regard as the proper estimates: to regulate our meats and drinks and social entertainments; to fix the amount of our donations to charitable objects; to say what employment, trade, profession, each shall pursue; what political party and measures, each shall support. Because about all these matters, there is an honest difference of sentiment. If church authority should be applied in any of these cases, union and harmony would be at an end.

And yet the present interference is equally unwarrantable; for the minority cannot be charged with a want of sincerity.

In all these private habits, and in our political opinions, an important question of duty is involved; but it is of right left to the conscience of each; and always must be till ethics attains to the certainty of mathematical science. No earthly power can be trusted to come between the conscience and its God. Minor differences must, from the nature of things, be expected.

There can always be plausible pretexts for interference. Suppose we, and those who think with us, constituted the majority;

and we should get a committee at work, and pass the following preamble and resolution.

Whereas certain members of this Church have so far mistaken their duty, as to suppose that they cannot consistently with their profession, either dance themselves or allow their children to dance—therefore

Resolved—That such opinions and practice, exhibit a want of “natural affection,” and are calculated to bring a charge of unreasonable austerity, upon religion; to alienate the affections of the young from the people of Christ; thus throwing a stumbling block in the way of salvation—and that we consider such a course a violation of duty, so plain that there can “be but little, if any doubt” about it.

Suppose we should put forth this resolution, and call upon the minority for docility, and “self distrust” as to their consciences, but ask reliance upon ours; telling them that hearts are deceitful above all things, and showing by our demands, that we supposed ours could not lead them astray; that man must not lean to his own understanding, but that they might safely rest beneath our wisdom, as under the shadow of a great rock in a weary land: And if all this display failed to obtain the required docility and “self distrust,” suppose we should insinuate that they were causing “divisions,” and disobeying that command which requires us to be “*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*,”* would they not look upon such an attempt to regulate their private and domestic affairs, supported by such means, as an abominable mockery?

Is not the present case a fair parallel?

When the allied armies entered France in 1814, they co-operated for a particular object—the taking of Paris. Suppose they had fought each other, on account of different costume, armor, and habits, would their purpose have been attained?

Ours is a more holy alliance, and we are marching, we trust, towards Heaven. Shall we be likely better to attain our object by stopping to quarrel on little peculiarities? Should we not, by so doing, forfeit all claims to christian forbearance?

“Say we these things as men? Saith not the Bible, for the most part, the same also?”* Romans 14, 3, “*Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him*”—(verse 5,) “*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*” Col. 2, 16, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink.*” Romans 14, 4, “*Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand*”—(verse 10,) “*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy*

* Report, page 7.

brother? *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*" 1st Corin. 4, 5, "*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.*"

How then can the majority, consistently with that "self distrust," which they say truly, all should feel, usurp the "*judgment seat of Christ*," and decide, touching these matters, "*before the time*?"

We have heard the right of the church justified by the remark—"that the minority had no right to complain; that they had their remedy, because if aggrieved, they could withdraw." What course could not be defended on the same principle? When Ferdinand and Isabella commanded the Jews to embrace the Catholic religion, they had a similar "remedy." They could leave the country of their birth, and seek a refuge from religious intolerance, in other lands. When Roger Williams was ordered to conform his views to those of the Boston clergy, the same "remedy" was at hand. He could seek an asylum among the sons of the forest.—We have our "remedy"! Because we refuse to receive for doctrines the commandments of men, we must be driven from beneath the shade of the tree, which our fathers have planted.

This was all that was wanting to rouse most of those who voted for the report, and more especially the pastor and Mr. Dole, who felt themselves particularly impinged upon by this document. If they wavered before as to the course proper to be pursued with relation to the dancing at Mrs. Weston's, they wavered no longer. All indecision disappeared. Freedom of opinion is the last boon to be yielded by bigoted men. Fond of spiritual authority and tenacious of their own opinions, they forget that others may be equally attached to theirs.

CHAPTER IV.

"For they speak not peace; but they devise deceitful matters against them THAT ARE QUIET in the land." Ps xxxv, 20.

"His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." Ps. vii, 16.

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then could I have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man my equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." Ps. lv, 12, 13, 14.

At the church meeting held May 1st, 1840, in the vestry of the south parish church in Augusta, after the "preparatory lecture" and other services were concluded the following complaints were presented:—

"The undersigned a member of the church of the South Parish, in Augusta, presents a complaint against Daniel C. Weston, also a member of said church, on the following grounds:

1. That during a discussion lately held by the church upon the Report of a committee, upon the subject of dancing, he uttered unkind and unjust insinuations against our pastor and against the church.

2. That in the same discussion he accused the church of tolerating "outrageous crime" in an individual who had communed with them, thereby censuring the character of an approved minister of the Gospel towards whom no such steps as Christ enjoins had been previously taken.

3. That during the same discussion he protested against our proceedings as not obligatory, and expressed his determination not to be governed by them.

4. That he has repeatedly, since the almost unanimous acceptance of the above mentioned Report, practically as well

as by words, disregarded the views and feelings of the church as expressed in that acceptance.*

This Complainant also feels aggrieved by the conduct and speech of Mrs. Paulina B. Weston, who, since the acceptance of the Report above mentioned, said to a young lady at her house, in the presence of another young lady, "*here you may dance as much as you please*"—shortly after invited a party of young people to meet there and engage in dancing, thus manifesting an utter disregard of the feelings and views of those fellow members of the same communion who had recently expressed their disapproval of such amusements.

This Complainant feels in like manner aggrieved by the conduct of Mrs. Catharine M. Fuller, also a member of this church, for having, both in conversation and practically, exhibited the same disregard of the recorded expression of the almost unanimous opinion of the church on the subject of dancing, as set forth in the acceptance of the Report.†

The Complainant does not tell this to the church without having tried to obtain satisfaction in private interviews with these members, agreeably to the direction of our Saviour, in Matt. xviii, both by himself and brother Kilburn. But not satisfied with the state of mind and feeling exhibited by the parties complained of, he thinks himself bound by covenant obligations, to bring the matter before the church, that they may act on the subject as they may deem best.

(Signed,)

E. S. TAPPAN."

The Rev. B. TAPPAN, having read the complaints, asked the church what order they would take thereon.

Dea. TAPPAN said he should like to enquire of the pastor whether ecclesiastical usage required parties, against whom complaints were filed, to stay from communion till after such complaints were disposed of?

The PASTOR replied that he could not speak with *absolute certainty*, but that he believed such to be the usage.

* This "practically" disregarding the views, &c. of the church, Deacon Tappan, in the presence of the committee appointed to report upon the case of D. C. Weston, explained to mean, that *the accused had played upon the violin for the dancing at Mrs. W.'s*. He said that he did not mean that Mr. Weston had personally engaged in the amusement.

† The *practical* "disregard" "of the opinion of the church," of which Mrs. F. was accused, Dea. T explained to mean that she *had played on the piano for the dancing at Mrs. W.'s*.

DEA. T. said that such was his opinion,* and that it would not operate unjustly, because the parties could claim as speedy an investigation as they wished, and the church could not refuse it. Whenever they were ready, the church was bound to try the cases.

D. C. WESTON. It seems to be the opinion of the pastor, and of his brother the deacon, that ecclesiastical usage requires parties, complained of, to stay away from communion, till such complaints have been disposed of. But neither dare speak with certainty. It cannot be agreeable to the persons complained of, to be left in doubt as to the wishes of the church. They consider it a duty to partake, according to the command of their Saviour, of the ordinance of the Lord's supper. They are not conscious of moral guilt, so far as these charges are concerned, and will come to His table unless this usage is rendered certain, or they are otherwise forbidden. Even if the usage is such as it is supposed to be, the church has power to waive it in favor of these individuals. If they wish my mother and sister (for myself I say nothing at present) to stay away from communion, let them say so distinctly.

DEA. T. If I was grieved at the conduct of a member, and went to him and could get no satisfaction, and I should request him to absent himself from communion, I should expect him to do so.

D. C. W. Suppose he should express himself grieved at your conduct, in finding fault, with that which appeared to him innocent; and request you to absent yourself likewise?

DEA. T. O! I should consider that entirely nugatory. He then remarked that in order to settle the question, he would move *that these individuals be requested to stay away from communion till their respective complaints had been disposed of.*

* The sacrament was to be administered on the *following Sabbath*; and Dea. T. and his brother, having this opinion upon "the usage," the complaints were presented *before that time*, undoubtedly to cut off these parties from that ordinance. If such had not been the desire, the complaints would have been *kept back until afterwards.*

J. HOOPER. I second the motion.

PASTOR. Did you mean, brother, to make your motion *specific* as to these individuals, or to make a *general* rule applicable to *all* complaints ?*

D. C. W. You cannot make an *ex post facto* law. Whatever rule you make, can apply to *future* cases only. In this case, the complaints are already filed.

The PASTOR was proceeding to combat this position.

D. C. W. Deacon Tappan has made a motion, *specific* as to these persons. Mr. Hooper has seconded it, and I do not wish it altered by you. I demand that you put it as made.†

PASTOR. I consider that I have a right to suggest an alteration. Brother, will you reduce your motion to writing.

The motion was then reduced to writing without alteration.

ELIAS CRAIG. I move that the motion be indefinitely postponed.

This was seconded; and J. H. HARTWELL, Esq., spoke at some length in its favor. He warned the church of the impropriety of driving from the communion table the parties accused, and told them by so doing they were entering upon a course that would lead, they knew not whither; that they were surrounding the case with circumstances which would tend greatly to embarrass it; that they would place themselves in a position which they would regret, and bring trouble from which it would be difficult if not impossible to escape. He reminded them that Judge Weston was absent from home on his official duties, from which he would return on the following evening: And what would be his feelings to find his family in the position, in which if Dea. Tappan's motion prevailed, they would be placed! Would he not have just cause to complain that these proceedings occurred in his absence? He had come to

* The pastor disliked the straight forward method of the deacon; and while he wished to bring about the same result, it was more in accordance with the mind of the man, to use *indirection* in the process.

† Mr. Weston hoped that a *direct* vote of suspension would be defeated.

the meeting with the hope of getting prepared to go to the communion table, and not to take measures to drive others away. It seemed to him that this was an unsuitable time to have introduced this subject.

J. HEDGE spoke in favor of the motion to postpone. He had no objection to these parties coming to communion, and to forbid them seemed not so much in accordance with his views of the kindness and charity of the religion of Jesus, as the opposite course.

Some one suggested, in order to avoid the difficulty, that communion should be postponed until the cases were disposed of, but this course was thought by others to be objectionable.

J. HOOPER was in favor of trying the cases on the next day (Saturday.)

J. H. HARTWELL said that if Mr. H. supposed that these cases could be settled in a day, he apprehended he would find his calculations erroneous.

WM. A. BROOKS was in favor of E. Craig's motion, and called for the yeas and nays.

HENRY GRIFFIN said he should vote differently on the question from what he should have done, in consequence of the bad spirit Mr. Weston had manifested towards our pastor, by speaking in the way he did after Dea. Tappan's motion.

The motion to postpone was lost by a vote of 12 to 9.

E. CRAIG said that the reason of his making the motion to postpone was, that he considered Dea. T.'s motion unnecessary, ecclesiastical usage being sufficient to accomplish the same object; and as the question now returned upon brother T.'s motion, he would request him to withdraw it to give place to one which would meet his views.

DEA. T. then withdrew his motion, and Elias Craig moved the following resolution, which was adopted.

"Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, it is usually expected that persons, against whom complaints are

*made, should absent themselves from communion until after such complaints have been acted upon."**

H. GRIFFIN said that there could be no harm in praying; that they could not, in so important business, be too much in prayer. Accordingly prayer was offered,

Adjourned to Wednesday evening, May 6.

Had this arbitrary and unusual act of suspension been perpetrated upon the most humble persons in the community, for such a cause, it would have excited indignation in the breast of every one whose mainly impulses were not crushed by a degrading and fanatical bigotry. To keep it secret was impossible. It became extensively known, and the two younger of the accused were entirely forgotten in the magnitude of the injustice done to Mrs. Weston, who, though a member of thirty years standing, was unheard, uncondemned, and in defiance not only of "*usage*" (which is not in favor of such a course,) but of every principle of christian courtesy, set aside from communion for no offence, except acting contrary to the *opinions* of men who protest against the infallibility of the Pope!

The church was composed of 181 members of both sexes, and probably four fifths of the whole were shocked at this proceeding: Yet fear "was on every side"; and though many had the courage to express their dissatisfaction, the opposition of the greater portion, overborne by their reverence for the pastor, whom they had long regarded as a standing monument of human perfectability, subsided into indistinct murmurs. Generous human nature asserted its prerogative for a moment, and then succumbed to the tyranny of habit.

* "When complaint is made of a CRIME, cognizable before any judicatory, NO MORE SHALL BE DONE AT THE FIRST MEETING, unless by consent of parties, than to give the accused a copy of each charge, with the names of the witnesses to support it; and a citation of all concerned, to appear at the next meeting of the judicatory, to have the matter fully heard and decided." *Article fourth of the "forms of process," taken from the "form of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian church in the U. S."*

Without this church, however, the measure met with reprobation from every impartial christian; and public opinion made itself heard with such effect that its authors afterwards attempted to avoid the responsibility of their vote.

Under these circumstances, Judge Weston, on his return, and his family could not bring themselves to listen to the preaching of a man who, if not at the bottom of the difficulty, could have easily prevented it; and of course changed their place of worship.*

CHAPTER V.

"Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten **CONTRARY TO THE LAW.**" Acts xxiii, 3.

"But Paul said unto them, they have beaten us **OPENLY, UNCONDEMNED**, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out **PRIVILY.**"? Acts xvi, 37.

"Devise not a lie against thy brother: neither do the like to thy friend."
Ecclesiasticus vii, 12.

"There is an *exquisite subtlety*, and the same is unjust; and there is one that *turneth aside* to make judgment appear." Ecclesiasticus xix, 25.

"God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything **CONTRARY TO HIS WORD, OR BESIDE IT**, in matters of faith or worship."

Constitution of the Presbyterian church in the U. S.

Vestry, May 6th.

JUDGE WESTON asked the favor of the church to take up *first* the case of his wife. He was to be at home but a short time, and deemed it his right, as well as duty to be present at her trial.

*They worshipped with St. Mark's church, which was temporarily provided with preaching about that time. This society did not spring up, as has been supposed by some, in consequence of the difficulties in Mr Tappan's church, though these, in the hands of an all wise Providence, tended largely to increase it.

DEA. T. moved that the complaints be taken up in the order in which he had presented them.

But the motion was lost, and the case of Mrs. Weston made first in order.

C. DOLE here remarked that the case could not proceed unless Mrs. W. should be present.

JUDGE W. objected to this as an unnecessary and cruel wounding of the sensibilities of a lady.

C. DOLE insisted. He had acted in several cases, (once in connection with Pres. Appleton) and never knew a church to proceed in the absence of the party accused.

Judge W. then sent for his wife, who shortly after came in, with her sister, Mrs. Ingraham.

JUDGE W. then offered the following:

Resolved, That the church adjourn to assemble at the meeting house tomorrow at ten o'clock, A. M., and that all farther proceedings upon the complaints of Dea. Tappan, recently filed before this society, be open and public.

CHURCH WILLIAMS. I second the motion.

JUDGE W. stated in support of the resolve, that the accused had been publicly censured by being kept from the communion table; that this was known throughout the town, and was even in the mouths of children. In so doing, he was informed that they acted contrary to ecclesiastical usage. By that usage the propriety of attending communion before trial, rested with the consciences of the accused; and with reason: for before the examination they only could know whether they were guilty or not.* If they felt themselves innocent, and went as usual to the table of their Master, and upon trial they were afterwards acquitted, the public would be ignorant alike of the charge and its termination. But in

*This position is fully sustained by Professor Upham's "RATIO DISCIPLINE," a work, the authority of which no congregationalist will dispute. On page 143, a form of admonition is given (to be used by the minister when the vote of suspension is communicated to the party concerned) that goes upon the supposition that the accused has been tried and found guilty. "I ADMONISH you to repent of the scandals which we HAVE SEEN PROVED AGAINST YOU," &c.

this case, by this public censure, the community had been informed that a charge had been made, and I demand, said he, that the public eye shall scrutinize your proceedings, and the nature of the offence which has brought upon the accused such serious consequences. I do not know whether this motion comports with ecclesiastical usage; but that is not important. You have departed from that usage by this premature censure; and you ought to depart from it in this, (if it is a departure,) in order that the groundlessness of the accusation may be as wide spread as the censure.

C. DOLE. The course pursued by the church on the complaint was, I believe, in conformity with usage, which requires suspension on the filing of charges. I have known several instances of this kind, (one in connection with Pres. Appleton;) and such has been the uniform custom in those instances. As for having our proceedings *public*, I apprehend it would be altogether in violation of usage in like cases.

CHURCH WILLIAMS spoke in favor of the motion. Mrs. W. had been publicly censured, and had a right to a public trial.

PASTOR. If it be your minds that the motion prevail please to manifest it—contrary minded—it is not a vote.*

D. C. WESTON. The motion was not fairly put. It is not parliamentary to call for the “contrary minded,” unless the vote is *doubted*: for the reason that there are always some who, though in favor of a measure, do not think it necessary to vote until its passage is doubted.

JUDGE W. Never mind. The vote, I perceive, is against me: But I can tell gentlemen that if their doings are not in accordance with justice, this shall be no closet business. I trust this motion has not been refused because there is any *intention* of doing that which cannot bear the light. Any appeal to the public is to be avoided if possible; but I admonish gentlemen that such appeal may be made if the circumstances require it.

The examination then commenced, the complaint having first been read—(for which see page 40.)

* This is his usual way of putting a motion which he wishes to be lost.

DEA. T. Do you intend, Mrs. Weston, to deny the expression charged in the complaint? Because, if so, I shall be obliged to send for my proof.*

JUDGE W. I will not permit the accused to be interrogated. Make out your case. There will, however, be no difficulty on that point.

DEA. T. I heard, through a member of my family, that Mrs. W. made use of the alleged expression in her presence; and subsequently learned that dancing took place. I called upon Mrs. W. The first time I called she was absent. The next, she had laid down. I called again in the evening, found her, and stated that I was grieved as alleged in the complaint. I also called on the following evening with brother Kilburn.

She expressed to me regret that there had been so much talk upon this subject, and said she never wanted to hear the word *dancing* mentioned again. She referred to her constant practice and opinions as being different from mine; that she had been educated in a way to give her different views from those in the "Report:"—And said she would not allow herself to be controlled in her opinions, or usual practice upon this subject, by any church action. She would be ground to powder first. So that not being able to obtain satisfaction from her, I felt it my duty to lay the matter before the church.

Cross examined.

JUDGE W. Are you satisfied, *in your conscience*, that you have fully and fairly represented the substance of your interviews with Mrs. W., stopping where you have?†

DEA. T. I am.

JUDGE W. Did she manifest, in these interviews, any unfriendliness towards yourself?

* Thus was this aggravating examination commenced with an insult. As if Mrs. W. was capable of denying an expression she had used! And, if she *did* deny it, as if her denial was to be overborne by the testimony of a young miss of 15, an inmate of Dea. T.'s family.

† Thus was Dea. T. put upon his guard in this solemn manner, and it rendered what subsequently came out so astounding to all present, that it required the utmost art and diligence of the pastor and the "leaders," *out of the vestry*, to still the murmurings of many.

DEA. T. She received me as usual, kindly and courteously, and appeared perfectly friendly to me. I will also state that she said this whole movement against dancing had been got up by a few *meddling* individuals.

D. C. WESTON. Did Mrs. W. express any regret that she had injured your feelings?

DEA. T. She said she was very sorry to have injured them.

JUDGE W. Why did you not state that before?

DEA. T. I could'nt undertake to tell the church *all* that passed, but only what I considered the *substance* of the conversation.

JUDGE W. It is a little singular, to say the least of it, that you should state whatever you supposed would make against the accused, and suppress what would make in her favor.

D. C. WESTON. When Mrs. W. said she would be ground to powder before she would be controlled by the report of the church, was it from stubbornness, or because she thought the church had *no right* to control her?

DEA. T. It struck me as exhibiting stubbornness.

D. C. W. Was it from a spirit of resistance to what she admitted to be a *just demand*, or did she deny the *right* of the church to interfere?

DEA. T. She did put it upon the ground that the church had no right to interfere.

D. C. W. Did she, or did she not, say that she would not, for the world, intentionally injure the feelings of any one?

DEA. T. I do not recollect exactly, but I believe she *did* say so.

D. C. WESTON. Well sir, if she expressed herself sorry that, acting according to her views of propriety, should have injured your feelings; and if she told you that she would not, for the world, intentionally injure the feelings of any one, how did your conscience allow you to make written complaint to the church that she had shown an "*utter disregard*" of *their feelings*?

DEA. T. I considered those expressions entirely *neutralized* by her saying that she would be ground to powder before she would be dictated to by the church.

D. C. W. When you first called upon her, did she not say, "now let us talk fairly and openly, and express our opinions *freely*, so that we may perfectly understand each other. It is of no use to talk and not be able to get at each other's meaning"?

DEA. T. She did say something of the kind.

D. C. W. You have complained to the church that, after the acceptance of the Report, she invited a party of young people to come to her house and *engage in dancing*. Did she not tell you, sir, that they *were not invited for the purpose of dancing*?

DEA. T. I don't recollect whether she did or not.

JUDGE W. That is very strange, when you called upon her for the very purpose of finding out about this dancing "party."

D. C. W. You have stated to the church that it was a "*party*." Did you not know that it was a *society* of young girls which met for the purpose of sewing in the afternoon, and playing in the evening?

DEA. T. I did. She also said that the society was invited *previous* to the acceptance of the Report.

D. C. W. Did Mrs. W. say that she acted from a sense of duty?

DEA. T. She did; and that she must always be guided by *her own* sense of duty and propriety.

D. C. W. What rule of the church did Mrs. W. violate, by allowing these children to dance?

DEA. T. It was in opposition to the Report.

JUDGE W. Put your finger, if you can, upon the passage which *prohibits* it.

DEA. T. I have said it was in opposition to the Report. I can make myself no plainer. The Report is as plain as the Decalogue.

JUDGE W. I perceive that nothing definite can be elicited from you. In the Report, which is about as definite as you are, it is said that parents should restrain

their children from dancing as "*usually practised.*" What does this expression mean?

DEA. T. It applies to dancing parties.

JUDGE W. What is a dancing party?

DEA. T. Any collection of people where there is dancing.

JUDGE W. Thank you, sir.

D. C. W. Do you consider any parent who allows his children to dance, as acting in opposition to the expressed will of the church?

DEA. T. I do.

D. C. W. At the time the Report was accepted, was it not distinctly stated that no compulsory power was to be used towards parents, beyond the moral power of the expressed opinion of the church? And did not D. Williams say he should resist any resolution, or action, which would render a parent amenable to the church for allowing his children to dance?

Here Mr. Dole who, apparently, considered Dea. T. unequal to the management of this part of the case, came forward and interrupted the examination. I took notes, said he, at the time the report was accepted, and can state what was said exactly. Dancing as "*usually practised*" was explained to mean public balls, assemblies, and miscellaneous social parties, where old and young, professors and non professors, met together. It does not apply to the *family circle*.*

JUDGE W. Will you stick to that?

C. DOLE. I will try to.

JUDGE W. Was the dancing in this instance at my house, *prohibited* by the church, by the acceptance of that "Report"?

C. DOLE. It was not *prohibited*. The church only expressed their *opinion* against it.

JUDGE W. Thank you, sir. I can get something

* Mr. Dole means, by the "*family circle*," the father and mother with their own children. If a single individual, belonging to another family, joins this "*circle*," it ceases to be a "*family circle*," and becomes a "*miscellaneous*" party.

definite from you, though it was impossible to do so from your colleague.

C. DOLE. I will further state that D. Williams *did* remark that he should resist anything compulsory upon parents; that christian parents could not be supposed capable of indulging their children in what they supposed hurtful: and it was understood that parents were not to be compelled. But I apprehend you misunderstood the Doctor.* Allow me to put a question to him.

Did you not, Dr. Tappan, mean to charge Mrs. W. with disregarding the *opinion* of the church merely, and *not* with violating an express prohibition?

DEA. T. Certainly, certainly. I merely meant to say that she had acted contrary to our opinions.

JUDGE W. If Mrs. W. violated no rule of the church, what business had you, sir, to go to my house, in my absence, and make these charges against her.

DEA. T. I consider such a question improper.

JUDGE W. Let me tell you, sir, that if Mrs. W. had violated no rule of the church, nothing against her can be made out, from anything which took place at a visit which you had no right to make. But let me ask you, if a person is amenable to the church for acting contrary to their expressed *opinion*, in what does the expression of an *opinion* differ from an *express law*?

DEA. T. I consider that I have the right to present a complaint, as well in the one case, as in the other.

Adjourned to the following evening.

* Dea. T. is a physician, and is usually called doctor.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul : let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

Ps. xxxv, 4.

"There is a wicked man that hangeth down his head sadly ; but inwardly he is full of deceit." Ecclesiasticus xviii, 7.

"Casting down his countenance, and making as if he heard not ; where he is not known, he will do thee a mischief before thou be aware."

Ecclesiasticus xix, 27.

"Will you, great sir, that glory blot
In cold blood, which you gained in hot ?
Will you employ your conqu'ring sword,
To break a fiddle and your word ?"

Hudibras.

Thursday evening, May 7th.

Cross examination of Dea. Tappan resumed.

D. C. WESTON. At what hour in the evening did you call upon the accused on your first visit?

DEA. T. I think at about seven.

D. C. W. Did she tell you that she had heard of your calling during the day ; that she conjectured the object of your visit ; and that she was so worn out and exhausted with the subject, that she had thought of writing you a note, requesting you to stay away?

DEA. T. I dont recollect that she said any thing about writing me a *note*.

D. C. W. Did she tell you she was unwell, that her health had been seriously affected by being so followed up upon this subject ;* that it had rendered her nervous, and deprived her of necessary sleep?

DEA. T. She did say something to that amount.

* The pastor had, soon after the acceptance of the Report, visited her, and remonstrated, at length, upon the impropriety of allowing children to dance. *Since the filing of the complaint, however, he has never called upon her.*

D. C. W. Did she, or not, tell you that the late Report, and proceedings of the church, had caused, and would cause, great injury to the cause of the Redeemer?

DEA. T. She did say so.

D. C. W. Did she say she had shed tears, when reflecting upon the wounds these proceedings had inflicted upon the cause of religion?

DEA. T. I dont recollect that she did make use of that form of expression.

D. C. W. Did she speak of the "revivals" in different parts of the State, and say that she hoped there would have been one here; but that these movements in the church, she thought, would retard such a blessing?

DEA. T. She did.

D. C. W. Did she tell you, she believed that this outcry against such kind of dancing, as she allowed at her house, was calculated to alienate the young, especially, from religious things?

DEA. T. She did. She also said that those children, who were allowed to dance, were less likely to carry it to excess, and cared less about it than those who were not.

D. C. W. Well, sir: when she made use of these expressions, which you have admitted she did use, did you doubt her sincerity?

DEA. T. I thought her conduct inconsistent with her remarks.

D. C. W. How so? If she supposed the course you were pursuing with regard to dancing, was injuring the cause of religion, was it not *perfectly* consistent that she should pursue a different course?

Here the pastor interposed and said that perhaps his brother *misunderstood* Mr. W.'s question.

DEA. T. (after reflection.) I had no reason to distrust her sincerity.

D. C. W. How then, could your conscience allow you to ask her, viewing the matter as she did, to aid yourself, and others, in a course which *you knew she sin*

cerely believed to be doing such injury to the cause of Christ?

DEA. T. I consider that question improper.

D. C. W. Did she tell you, that in allowing the dance of which you complain, she had not departed, in the least, from her *usual course*?

DEA. T. She did.

D. C. W. How long was your visit, on that occasion, protracted?

DEA. T. I think I did not leave till after the bell rung for nine.

D. C. W. How soon after that, did you repeat your visit in company with Mr. Kilburn?

DEA. T. On the next evening, or the next but one.

D. C. W. How long was your visit on that occasion?

DEA. T. I think we staid something over an hour.

J. J. KILBURN. I think our visit extended to more than *two* hours.

D. C. W. After what Mrs. W. had said to you, Dea. Tappan, about the weak state of her nerves, her injured health, and sleepless pillow, *in consequence of the agitation of this very subject, upon which you called to converse*, do you think it becoming a christian or gentleman to follow her up in this manner?

DEA. T. I dont think I am called upon to answer such questions.

D. C. W. Was not Mrs. W., on this last occasion, a good deal agitated and grieved?

DEA. T. She was at the close of the evening.

D. C. W. Did she say she had seen a great deal of trouble, for the last years of her life, and that she was deeply grieved and wounded that she should be dealt with, at her time of life, upon the subject of dancing?

DEA. T. She did; and I expressed for her my sympathy; and told her I recollected with gratitude her friendship for me, and her kindness in former years.

D. C. W. When she began to speak of her troubles and her grief at this treatment, did she not burst into tears?

DEA. T. I wont say she burst into tears. She was a good deal agitated. I was not standing very near. She might have shed tears.

D. C. W. What do you say upon this point, Mr. Kilburn?

J. J. KILBURN. I was sitting near her. She was a good deal agitated, and wept.

D. C. W. Do you think, Dea. T., that her appearance, upon that occasion, afforded you sufficient grounds upon which to drag her before the church, as an incorrigible backslider, who ought to be dealt with by the church?

DEA. T. I am not bound to answer that question.

D. C. W. At the time the "Report" was accepted, was it not distinctly stated that no coercive measures were to be applied to parents?

DEA. T. It strikes me there was a disclaimer of any intention to coerce parents.

C. DOLE (again interfering). The church state in the Report which they accepted, that they have a "*strong impression*" that it is improper for parents to allow their children to dance. Mr. Hooper wished for a *resolve*, bearing directly upon parents: but some stated that they should go against a *resolve* of this kind; and it was not thought best to put one upon the records.

D. C. W. Was it not the understanding that parents were *not to be coerced* in this affair, any farther than the moral power of an expression of opinion by the church was calculated to coerce?

C. DOLE. It was the understanding that parents must keep their children from dancing as "*usually practised*"; *but that they were not to be coerced, as to the instrumentalities which they should employ to restrain them.**

* That is to say—some might whip their children, others bribe them with cake, others let them go journeys, in order to prevent their dancing. The church merely meant to deny parents the right of allowing this amusement, leaving them *wholly free and unshackled as to the methods of restraint!* Wonderful liberality!

This man's testimony is perfectly unexplainable. It will be seen that immediately after he contradicts this statement. Was this owing to misrecollection? or was it the floundering of one who had fallen into his own pit?

D. C. W. How did you understand it, Dr. Snell?

Dr. SNELL. I understood, at the time of the acceptance of the Report, that parents were to be left to their own judgment and discretion as to how far they would allow their children to indulge in this amusement.

D. C. W. So D. Williams thought.

C. DOLE. I had several conversations with D. Williams at the time and since. He was in favor of the Report; said it commended itself to his judgment; but that he should resist coercive measures upon parents. He and I were agreed in our views; and it was the understanding that parents were not to be coerced.

D. C. W. (here rose in his place and said.) I wish this point distinctly understood. The Report was accepted with the understanding that parents were not to be coerced into conformity by church discipline. *Does any deny it?*

[Here was a pause, and no one denied the truth of the statement.]

D. C. W. What forbearance, Dea. T., was there in not passing a *resolve*, if it was intended that an expression of opinion was equally powerful? Was it not all a pretence to get the votes of individuals who would have otherwise opposed the Report?

DEA. T. That is not for me to answer.

D. C. W. Will Mr. Dole answer. If people can be arraigned here for going contrary to an *opinion* of the church, in the same manner that they can be arraigned for going against a *resolution*, will you have the goodness to point out the difference, in practical effects, between expressing an *opinion* and passing a *resolution*?

C. DOLE. That is a matter of opinion. I did not bring this complaint.

I will however throw out a suggestion. In a christian body, obligations arise from the *law of love*. I told you, on the evening of the acceptance of the Report, that four fifths, or nine tenths of Evangelical churches have the same views on the subject of dancing as those contained in the Report, even if nothing was said about it

on their records: So that we can get at a *principle* to sustain a complaint of grievance, such as has been presented in this case, *without the Report*.

JUDGE W. If the gentleman will pardon me a moment, I should like to make a single remark. I had prescribed to myself that I would not say a word until after my son, who is more familiar with the facts in the case, had got out the testimony: But I wish, in a friendly way, to suggest a single word of caution. Gentlemen are sitting here as *judges* in this case; and I would ask whether it is just, or courteous, to express opinions before hand? How do they know they shall not think differently before the case is over? I do hope the impatience of gentlemen will not lead them to prejudge the case.

DEA. MEANS. It seems to me, if those ideas are carried out, this will be an *ex parte* proceeding. I would suggest that some persons be appointed to conduct the trial on the part of the church. It seems to me that as we are going on now, the accused party has the advantage.

C. DOLE. The suggestion of Judge Weston seems to me a proper one. I did not, and do not intend to express an opinion; nor do I think I have done so. I was going to observe further, that the difference between the church's merely expressing an *opinion* upon any subject, and passing a direct prohibition by a *resolve*, is, in my view this. I don't know as it is sound, but it occurs to me and I throw it out. When a *resolve* is passed, it becomes the *duty* of every member of the church, who sees a violation of it, to take measures with regard to it. When an *opinion* only is expressed, it rests with each whether he will make complaint for a violation or not. It becomes a *personal* matter between individual and individual. If any one feels aggrieved, he may express his grief to the offending party, and to the church. If he does not feel aggrieved, he need not say anything about it. Resolutions *must* be enforced: opinions *may* be.

D. C. W. Dea. Tappan, does the explanation of Mr. Dole meet your views?

DEA. T. Not precisely. If I see a person acting contrary to a solemnly expressed opinion of the church, whether I feel *personally* aggrieved or not, I consider it my duty to complain.

D. C. W. Then an opinion of the church is equally powerful with a resolve?

DEA. T. I have as much right to be grieved in the the one case as in the other.

D. C. W. And yet several voted for the Report with a contrary impression; under the idea that they *gained* something by not allowing a resolution upon our records. *You yourself say that you think there was a disclaimer of any intention to coerce parents.* Now if an opinion is equally binding with a resolution, how do you justify it to your conscience, that you kept still, and allowed people to vote for what you saw they did not understand?

DEA. T. I shall decline answering such questions.

D. C. W. You stated, Mr. Dole, last evening, that dancing as "usually practised," meant public balls, assemblies, and miscellaneous social parties, where old and young, professors and non professors, met together. Did the dancing in this case, at Mrs. Weston's, of these little girls, come within the rule which you then stated?

C. DOLE. I am aware that it does not: But this case may be complained of under the general principle which I have before mentioned, in speaking of the *law of love*.*

D. C. W. Dr. Snell, did you not understand, at the time of the acceptance of the Report, that such dancing as was allowed in this case by Mrs. Weston, was expressly excepted?

DR. SNELL. I did so understand it.

* It will be borne in mind that the complaint is based upon the assertion that Mrs. W.'s acts were *contrary to the Report*; and it will be perceived how Mr. Dole attempts to remedy this difficulty, which probably occurred to him a few moments afterwards, by a different meaning of "usually practised."

C. DOLE. Your opinion and mine, brother Weston, were alike as to what "usually practised" meant, as appears by a note in your "vindication:" So that you understood its meaning. The only dancing excepted was that in the *family circle*.*

D. C. W. I am aware, brother Dole, that I comprehended perfectly, the meaning of "usually practised." I do not pretend that I misunderstood it. I had watched the movements of certain gentlemen all along, and supposed I understood their intentions; and that the Report excluded all dancing whatever. The fact which I desired to make appear is this—that false pretences were held out in order to get the votes of certain gentlemen who were deceived by the explanations given at the time, as to the meaning of "usually practised." I am glad, brother Dole, that you admit the note, alluded to, in the vindication, was fair and just, and expressed your meaning.

But did you not say, Mr. Dole, during the discussion upon the Report, that, if accepted, consistency would not require the church to follow up any infringement of it with church discipline?

C. DOLE. I don't remember of using any such expression. I kept minutes of what I said, and know that I could not have said so. I have received a note from a member of your family, charging me with having said this, and some other things, and was somewhat surprised.†

* Compare this with the preceding answer of Mr. Dole. The note in the "vindication" referred to, is on page 29, to which I beg the reader's attention. The meaning which Mr. Dole attaches to what he calls the "family circle," has been already explained in the note, page 51.

† The note referred to, is the following :—
MR. C. DOLE.

Dear Sir—On the evening, on which your Report upon dancing was accepted, you gave to DANIEL WILLIAMS the most solemn assurances, in presence of the church, that the acceptance of the "Report" did not, by any means, *bind* parents, but left them wholly free to exercise their own judgment and discretion. You will recollect that Mr. HOOPER wished a resolution passed, *compulsory* upon parents; this Mr. Williams said he should "resist;" and also "that christian parents could not be supposed willing to allow their children any amusement which they supposed would

D. C. W. I understood both you and the pastor to make that remark. If Mrs. Ingraham is present, I would inquire of her whether she does not recollect the remark.

Mrs. J. H. INGRAHAM. I understood Mr. Dole to make that remark: but recollect with more vividness that Mr. Tappan made it.

PASTOR. I *did* say that the adoption of the Report did not impose upon the church the obligation of following up any breach of it by disciplinary measures: but what I *meant* was that they *would not be obliged to do so any more than in other cases*. The church is not obliged to discipline for *every* immorality, but possesses discretionary power. For instance, we are not obliged to discipline for every act of evil speaking; so in cases of this nature, where the offence is against the spirit of the gospel, the church has discretionary power.*

JUDGE W. If such was your meaning, do you suppose it conveyed the slightest information to those present, of which they were not possessed before?

PASTOR. Well, I dont know, sir.

D. C. W. If you had explained your meaning at the

be injurious to their eternal welfare." The "Report" was then accepted with the express understanding (that is to say, expressed by you, and uncontradicted by any member of the church present) that christian parents were to be left free as aforesaid. And furthermore, on the same evening, when my brother objected to the acceptance of this "Report" on the ground that, if accepted, *consistency* would require the church to follow up any infringement by disciplinary measures, *you*, as well as our Pastor, expressly stated that consistency would not require it. In *this* likewise you were *uncontradicted* by Dr. E. S. Tappan, or any other member of the church. Since that time Dr. Tappan has (as you must have heard) conducted in a manner, calculated to convey the impression that this "Report" was procured to be accepted by *false pretences*. In view of these facts, I call upon you as an honest man, to appear at the Vestry of the south parish church, on Wednesday evening next, at seven o'clock, and then and there protest against any action upon the complaints of Dr. E. S. Tappan, so far as my mother and myself are concerned.

Yours, respectfully,

May 2d, 1840.

C. M. FULLER.

* Compare this with what is said by his brother, Deacon T., (page 59.) "If I see a person acting contrary to a solemnly expressed opinion of the church, whether I feel personally aggrieved or not, I consider it my duty to complain."

time, as you have now explained it, I apprehend the vote upon the acceptance of the Report, would not have been so unanimous as it was.

Does the complainant intend to introduce any farther testimony?

DEA. T. I intend to ask Mr. Hooper a question.—Does your daughter, Mr. Hooper, belong to the young society which met at Mrs. Weston's?

J. HOOPER. She does.

DEA. T. Was she present at Mrs. Weston's?

J. HOOPER. She was not, for this reason. I understood that when the invitation was given, some one said that she had heard that Mrs. Weston had said, that they might dance at her house, as much, and as long as they pleased.

D. C. W. Have you any farther questions?

DEA. T. I have not.

D. C. W. Then it seems, Mr. Hooper, from Mrs. W.'s openness upon the subject, you received ample warning, (although in a rather *circutious* manner,) of the temptation to which your daughter would be exposed?

J. HOOPER. I did.

D. C. W. Of course then you have no complaint to make. Has the complainant any thing more?

DEA. T. I wish to state that upon my last visit at Mrs. Weston's she proposed this question. You see how the case is: What do you want me to do? I replied—"in the language of younger days, Mrs. W., *I want you to say you are sorry for what you have done, and that you wont do so again.*"—After the softened state of feeling previously mentioned, I asked her again if she would not give me the satisfaction sought: but still she *persisted* in her previous sentiments.

D. C. W. Is it *possible* that, after you had talked with her so many hours, she still retained her original opinions?

H. GRIFFIN. Would it not be well to have the answers of the witness addressed to the moderator?

DEA. T. I would farther state that Mr. Daniel Weston, in presence of his mother, remarked—

D. C. W. You need not tell what I said, unless she assented to it.

DEA. T. It was the remark about being "ground to powder." If you have any objection to the expression I wont repeat it.

D. C. W. I have no objection to your repeating that expression. I like it.

DEA. T. Well then. After the softened state of feeling, spoken of, when I asked Mrs. W. for the satisfaction for which I came, D. C. Weston remarked, "what do you want more? She has told you she would be ground to powder before she will be dictated to in this manner."* Mrs. W. said she could give pledges to no one; that this winter's dancing was nearly over, and that we might both of us be dead before another winter.

D. C. W. Is the testimony all out? If so I shall proceed to open the case on the part of the accused.

DEA. T. I have nothing farther to offer.

* Mrs. Weston did not, on the evening alluded to, use this expression about being "ground to powder," &c. It was said on the previous evening to Dea. T. (who she *supposed* was making her a common, friendly visit—and, by the way, his making public this conversation seemed to her both ungenerous and ungentlemanly) when he, knowing her views upon the subject of dancing, said she must yield her opinions, no matter how conscientiously formed, and be governed by the Report. The arrogance of this demand drew forth the expression that she would be ground to powder before her views of duty should be surrendered to the dictation of others.

At the time when D. C. Weston made the remark, to which Deacon T. testifies, Mrs. W. and her daughter were in tears, and Dea. T. was urging the former to say that she was sorry she had allowed dancing, and that she would not allow it again. D. C. Weston, therefore, wishing to cut the visit short, called his attention to this expression, used by her on the previous evening, to show him that his attempts were hopeless.

At this point, had not Mr. Weston's fears of adding to the distress of his mother and sister, got the better of his indignation, the interview might have ended more creditably or less creditably to him, according to the temperament of the reader.

What this remark of Mr. W.'s had to do with the case of Mrs. W. it is hard to conjecture. The christian forbearance of *her* reply to his insulting demand, cannot but forcibly impress itself upon the mind. It was that she could not say she was sorry, not being conscious of guilt, and that she did not think she ought to be required to give pledges for the future; and then, in order to reconcile him to her refusal to comply with his wishes, she added, that this winter's dancing was nearly over, and that they might not both live until another winter.

D. C. WESTON then opened the case on the part of the accused.

He commented upon his singular position, as a son standing up, in defence of his mother, before an Ecclesiastical Court,—and that mother, one who had taught his infant lips the praises of God; one who for 28 years had been a member of this church, and throughout that long period had conducted herself not only without reproach, but had been an ornament to her profession and an honor to the church. [Here he was corrected by his father, who stated that she had been a member for 30 years.]

He then spoke of the position of the parties. The complainant, said he, in this case, comes forward and demands that church discipline be applied. Now when is discipline required? Why, in cases where there has been a backsliding from Christ and a breach of His laws: Not only so, the backslider must be irreclaimable by private admonition which must first be exhausted. Is this such a case?

The complainant in this case has expressed himself aggrieved by the conduct of the accused: but in what cases has a man a right to be *grieved* at the conduct of his brother? Certainly not when that brother acts in the sincerity of his heart, and according to the light which God has given him. It must not be upon a point about which there is a difference of opinion amongst the pious, but one, upon which every christian beholder would say, without hesitation, "*it is contrary to the commands of Christ.*" If the complainant is pursuing a certain course which I think wrong, and I endeavor to convince him of his error, but cannot: if he can give reasons for his conduct, and satisfies me that he is honest and sincere, I have no right to be *grieved* because he cannot see with my eyes. On the contrary, ought I not carefully to review the grounds of my own opinion, and examine lest haply I myself be in an error?

How is it here? The complainant admits that he had no reason to distrust the sincerity of the accused. Her

character, her life, her appearance, her tears forbid distrust. Even *he* admits the honesty of her heart. Why then does he complain? Because she would not admit that to be wrong, which she honestly thought to be right: because she would not accede to his insulting demand and say she *was sorry for what she had done, and that she would not do so again*. Is there a man present who will uphold him in this demand?

It is persecution for opinion's sake—a persecution, above all others, disgraceful in any man, but, if possible, more inexcusable in the christian. Listen to a sentence in the Report, upon the committee to draft which, was this same *accuser*. "We know, however, that there are very many causes that operate to produce *diversity* of views, and *difference* of conduct among professors of evangelical religion. So long as those, who have been born from above, are sanctified but in part, and see as through a glass darkly—so long as their *feelings* and *wishes* operate on their *judgments*, and their *practice* affects their *opinions*, it is hardly to be expected that all should *think* alike; and of course, *not believing the same things*, that *all should mind the same things*."* And yet, with the ink of this scarcely dry, the accused is brought here to answer for the immorality of differing from him, and the majority of the church, upon a point, about which, there is disagreement amongst the best of christians.

Which, then, is the aggrieved party?

And here I cannot help remarking upon the appearance of the *accuser*. You have heard him testify, and have seen the reluctance with which every thing, in favor of the accused, came out. Forgetting that you were the judges, and that you, and not himself, were to weigh the facts and expressions proved, he has undertaken to simplify the case, and save you a vast deal of

* These expressions are intended to be qualified, we suppose, by what follows, to wit: "Still, what is matter of *fact*, may differ materially from what is matter of *obligation*." Perhaps this, properly understood, would make things clear. But the difficulty is to understand it. See Report, page 6.

tr. .ole, by suppressing in the outset, a very material part of his conversations with the accused: But a vigorous cross examination forced from him that, which he did not mean you should know; and it appeared that the accused told him she was sorry she had injured his feelings, and that she would not wound the feelings of any one, intentionally, for the world. He was asked the reason why he did not voluntarily state to the church these disclaimers and expressions of regret, and he told you that he considered all these "*neutralized*" by the remark that she would be "ground to powder" before she would yield to his demands.*

Really one would suppose he was a chemist in his laboratory, talking about acids and alkalies, instead of moral sentiments: But let us see what this powerful ingredient is, which *neutralizes* so much that is exhibitive of christian love, and forbearance and good will. She conceived that the complainant was demanding what he had no right to demand. He was shaking over her head an authority that she did not recognize; and she declared she would be "ground to powder" before her conscience should bow to spiritual domination. It was upon principle, that she resisted. Was this stubbornness? Then were the martyrs stubborn, whose souls ascended to heaven on the flames which consumed their bodies. Has the complainant yet to learn that those who are all meekness and forbearance, may, in a matter of conscience, become firm as a rock? Could he not reconcile her expressions of regret and tenderness of feeling, with her firmness in a matter of duty, without the introduction of this chemical analogy? O no. Her refusal to submit to injustice holds in solution every christian feeling.

But what is the crime charged? Suppose, for a moment, the complaint to be based upon truth, and that the "conduct and speech" of the accused were in opposition to the Report. (Passing by the frivolous nature of

* See page 50.

the charge) has it not been proved, that at the time when that report was accepted, the "leaders" declared that church discipline was by no means involved thereby? * Has it not been further proved that it was declared on the same occasion, that parents were not to be bound by that Report, but left to their own judgment and discretion? † Suppose then she *has* acted in opposition to the Report; are these pledges nothing? Are promises nothing? And yet these must first be swept away, before sentence of condemnation can be pronounced. Nay they *have been* violated, or this complaint would have been dismissed, in the outset, instead of having been made the basis of suspension. ‡

But much of this complaint has been disproved from the accuser's own mouth.

First. He has charged the accused with inviting this "party," "*after*" the acceptance of the late Report. It turns out on the cross examination, that he *knew* they were invited before. §

Again. He has alleged that it was a "party of young people." The meaning, commonly attached to the word "party," is well known to that gentleman, and to every one here; and he gave the church (who immediately upon the complaint, suspended the accused) to understand that she had sent out her invitations to her young friends, and given, at her house, a regular dancing "*party*." The church, when the complaint was read must have supposed that such was the fact. We have it from the accuser himself that it was a *society* of young Misses, which met for the purpose of sewing in the afternoon and playing in the evening. §

Again he has alleged that this "party" was invited to meet at her house "and engage in dancing:"—that is, if language has any meaning, that they were invited for

* See pages 60 and 61.

† See pages 56 and 57.

‡ Several have declared, since this prosecution commenced, that, but for these pledges, they never would have voted for the Report.

§ See page 50.

the express purpose of dancing,—that it was a *dancing party*. He has admitted before you that it was a *society*, which met for the purpose of “sewing” as well as “playing.”* Dancing was not the object of the meeting, but only incidental to it. Of course, when he declared this “party” met *for the purpose of dancing*, he knew that the fact would not justify the assertion.

Again, he has alleged that she showed an “utter disregard of the feelings and views” of the church. He has acknowledged before you that she expressed to him sorrow, that she had injured his feelings, and declared that she would not, for the world, intentionally wound the feelings of any one:† And what renders it more remarkable is that he tells you “he had no reason to doubt her sincerity.”‡

Here are four distinct, and palpable misrepresentations, made under a full knowledge of the truth. What was elicited, on the cross examination, has (I will not say falsified, but use the accuser’s own term) “*neutralized*” all those circumstances which, it was supposed, would aggravate the offence. That so many erroneous statements should have been compressed in so small a compass, almost exceeds belief; and what renders it still more incredible is that the complainant was attempting, in this way, to uphold the honor of the Saviour. His pious heart was *grieved* that the accused should so far forget her duty as to allow children to dance; and to repair the injury, he begins by four downright misrepresentations. But what, after all, is the offence charged upon the accused? Has she broken any of the commands of the Decalogue? Has she set at defiance any of the requirements of Christ or his Apostles? Has she been a slanderer, or backbiter, or busy body in other men’s matters? O no. Something worse: for these are not thought worth the notice of the church. *She has allowed some of her neighbors’ children to dance at her house.* Not at unsuitable hours, or against the wishes of their parents. This is the unpar-

* See page 50.

† See page 59.

‡ See page 54.

donable sin she has committed. The expression "here you may dance as much as you please" does not vary the case in the least: for if the dancing was innocent, that was innocent also.*

Whether this was an offence I shall leave to be examined by him whose right more peculiarly it is to resist this extraordinary movement.

With these few remarks, if no one objects, I will read the statement of the accused.

MRS. WESTON'S STATEMENT.

"To the South Parish Church in Augusta.

The subscriber, a member of the church, against whom Deacon Tappan has preferred a complaint, makes the following statement of facts.

Some time in March last, she saw a young lady who belonged to the "Winter Circle" which was to meet at the house of the subscriber according to a previous understanding. She said to her "you may come here next time" and added, "you may dance as much as you please." She understands what passed on that occasion reached the ear of her accuser, through a member of his family, who happened to be present.

On the evening of the 28th ult., her accuser called upon her, in the absence of her husband, and the matter was fully discussed, as she thought in a friendly way, for more than two hours. Presuming there was an end of the affair, she was surprised, the following evening, at a second visit from him and Mr. Kilburn, her husband still remaining from home. On one, or both of these occasions, her accuser declared himself aggrieved at the remark complained of, and also that she had invited young people to her house for the purpose of dancing, so soon after the acceptance of the late Report. The subscriber told him she did not invite them for the purpose of dancing, nor to show the majority of the church, that she disregarded their feelings; that so

* It was like saying, "here you may sing as much as you please."

far as it had caused grief to him or to others, she regretted it, but that she must be governed by her own sense of duty and propriety. She reiterated again and again, how sorry she was to have wounded his feelings, but that he had no right to be grieved, as she had not departed from her usual course. She stated to him, that it was not a party, invited for the purpose of dancing, but a society met to work in the afternoon for some benevolent object, and to spend the evening in sports and plays, at which time they are usually joined by some of their mates of the other sex; that dancing was not the object of the meeting but merely incidental to it. She told him, she was not conscious of having done any thing wrong, but that if she had, she hoped she should be led to see it; that there would probably be but little more dancing until next winter, and we might not live until that time.

But still her accuser insisted, to use his own language, that she should say, that "she was sorry and would not do so again." To accede to these demands, was of course, with her views, impossible.

How far his statements to the church conform to these facts, they will judge. He has accused her, after her strong asseverations to the contrary, of "manifesting an utter disregard to the feelings and views of those fellow members of the same communion, who had recently expressed their disapproval of such amusements." How far, after what passed, a gentleman and a christian could use such language, it is not easy for her to comprehend.

Having made the foregoing statements, she deems it her duty to protest, that in so doing, she does not submit to the jurisdiction of the church in this matter. She has agreed to be governed by their discipline, only so far as they shall be guided by the word of God.* That Holy

* The following extract from the Covenant of this church, shows how far Mrs. Weston's conscience was surrendered to its keeping.

"YOU TAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD TO BE YOUR DIRECTOR INTO THE SENSE OF THE SACRED ORACLES, and to be your sanctifier and

Book, she has long esteemed it both a duty and a privilege, to study with prayerful attention. She has been unable to find any thing there, which forbids, either in direct terms, or by fair implication, children or others to move their limbs responsive to music. Nor was any such prohibition perceived by her parents, or by their parents, whose praise is in the churches, and who had too much reverence for the word of God, which was in their estimation the pearl of great price, to tolerate any thing, which could appear doubtful, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. She has the best reason to believe, that they regarded dancing as an innocent amusement. Such also was the opinion of the former pastor of this church, who officiated when she became one of its members.

She understands, that twenty five members of this church have recently discovered, that this amusement is sinful; and that this is a fair deduction from the word of God. They have published to the world their opinion, and the authority upon which it is founded. She has examined it with care; and the result to which they have arrived does not commend itself to her judgment, or to her conscience. It was not so understood by the excellent of the earth, who have gone before us. What they could not see, and what she cannot see, she does not deem it her duty to recognize, at the bidding of those who declare that it has been disclosed to them. Let who will require it, she dares not call evil good, and good evil, in opposition to the moral discernment and light, which God has given her; and she understands that a woe is denounced in scripture upon those who presume to do so.

She has hitherto been happy in believing, that the path of duty was clearly pointed out; that the way of salvation, which had been prepared by the son of God and his holy apostles, had been made so straight and plain,

comforter. You will sacredly regard every personal and relative duty. You will submit yourself to the care and discipline of this church, so FAR AS THEY SHALL BE GUIDED BY GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD."

that a way faring man, though a fool, should not err therein; and that this could not depend upon the fluctuating opinions of the day. She is aware, that there is a fashion in dress and in manners; but she does not admit that there is properly a fashion in morals or in religion. That she had thought, that in these the enquiry ought to be for the good old paths, and that she is fearful that new paths and new lights, may lead her astray.

In conclusion, she again protests against the jurisdiction of the church in this matter.

She appeals from the judgment of fallible man to the law and to the testimony. She appeals to the searcher of hearts, and to the final Judge of quick and dead before whom we must all appear.

If a majority of the church have such feelings towards her, in consequence of her opinions of some recreations differing from theirs, that they cannot allow her to sit with them at the table of their common Lord, she can only say she forgives them, and that it is her sincere prayer, that the "Master of the feast" may forgive them also.

PAULINA B. WESTON."

Augusta, May 6th, 1840.

Adjourned to the following evening.

CHAPTER VII.

"And when he was accused of the CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? *And he answered him to never a word.*" Matt. xxvii, 12, 13, 14.

"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them."

Ps. xxi, 12.

"Hold your peace, let me alone that I may speak, and let come on me what will." Job xiii, 13.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." Acts xxiv, 25.

Friday evening, May 8th.

DEA. T. expressed a wish to put certain questions to the accused.

JUDGE W. That gentleman has been at my house several times in my absence. He has talked to the accused for four hours. He has represented her conversation himself. She has put into the case her statement; and I cannot now consent to any attempt to elicit anything more from her.

DEA. T. The questions which I wish to put relate to certain *apparent* discrepancies. I do not ask permission to put them as a matter of *favor* or *courtesy*: but I demand it as a *right*.

J. HEDGE. It seems to me that if the parties could converse, we might very soon come to an understanding. A good deal of time has already been consumed in debate, it seems to me unnecessarily. Let us act in a christian spirit. Mr. Weston has certainly abused Mr. Tappan, as far as language can abuse him.

D. C. W. Which Mr. Weston do you refer to?

J. HEDGE. I refer to you.

D. C. W. So I supposed. But the church will judge whether I have said anything in which I was not amply borne out by the facts in the case.

DEA. T. I acquit the gentleman of any intentional abuse. As several members have come in since my request was made, I now repeat that I wish to put certain questions to Mrs. Weston.

JUDGE W. I have stated that I will not consent to it. He has questioned her enough. I regret to say it (though I feel myself obliged to do so) that I *suspect* the purpose of that gentleman. After what has happened, I dare not trust him. I have said all I wish to say upon this point. The church can determine whether the questions shall be put.

PASTOR. Judge Weston says he is willing the church should decide whether the questions shall be put.

JUDGE W. I *did*. Whether, however, the questions shall be answered or not, will be decided in a different quarter.

C. DOLE. Our starting point has not been according to the Bible, and our course of proceeding at these meetings, has been different from any which I have ever seen in such cases.

The state of mind, in which I went home last evening, was pleasant; and after reflection, I deem it my duty to suggest that the Bible method has not been pursued. That method I shall claim the privilege of pursuing. We have entirely misapprehended the proper course. Cases *here* should be conducted differently from those in *Courts of Law*. I never knew one where evidence was required. We ought to be guided, in *our* proceedings, by the *law of love*; and I shall claim the privilege of putting questions to sister Weston, if the church permit it, and she can consult with her friends as to whether she will answer. Two persons can soon understand each other by pursuing *the law of love*.

JUDGE W. To put an end to farther discussion on the request of Dea. Tappan, I will remark that Mrs. W. desires me to state that she will submit to no farther interrogatories from that gentleman.

DEA. T. That settles the matter; and I can only say I am very sorry. I wanted to have inquired whether the invitation to the society to meet at her house, was given *before* or *after* the acceptance of the Report. I can *prove* that it was given after.

JUDGE W. There was an understanding, *previous* to the acceptance of the Report, that the society should meet at her house at *some* time, not far ahead, though the exact day was not determined until *afterwards*. This fully appears from her statement of facts. She there says that "sometime in March last, she saw a young lady who belonged to the "winter circle" which was to meet at the house of the subscriber, according to a *previous* understanding." She said to her "you may come here next time"—a form of expression which shows there was a previous arrangement.

D. C. W. Whether the invitation was given before or afterwards, the discrepancy so far as Dea. T. is concerned, remains. Suppose, for a moment, that the invitation was given out *de novo*, *after* the acceptance of the Report; it appears from what came out on the cross examination,* that the *accuser* understood Mrs. W. to state to him that the society was invited *previous to the acceptance*. Of course he must have supposed such to have been the fact at the time he penned a contrary statement in the complaint. So that the discrepancy would still remain.

C. DOLE. I am aware of that and understand it. But I wish to put to brother Tappan one question. Did you not have the *impression*, at the time you penned the charge, that the invitation was given *after* the acceptance of the Report?

DEA. T. To be sure I did.† I know that the complaint is not technically correct. I may have admitted things, through inadvertency, questioned as I have been by two lawyers, and one a man of great experience. I may have been bungling, but I have not wittingly misrepresented anything.

* See page 50.

† Why?

JUDGE WESTON'S REMARKS IN DEFENCE.*

JUDGE W. then rose and said,

Mr. Moderator.—The testimony having closed, I am forced, from the position in which I am placed, and from my relation to the accused, to address to you such remarks as the occasion seems to require. I shall speak plainly and fully, at the hazard even of being tedious, but I hope and trust, that I shall be patiently heard. I fear I shall have much to say to the pastor and to the church, which may be unpalatable, and possibly to some minds startling, but I assure you I shall affirm nothing, which I do not believe to be true, and make use of no reasoning or illustration, which does not appear to me fair and appropriate. If my voice, manner or language may sometimes betray emotion, it will be because I am not able to suppress the stirrings of nature within me. I am a man, and I claim not to be exempted from human passions.

Comparing the charge, with the answer of the accused, as to the facts, we cannot but be forcibly impressed with their entire dissimilarity in spirit and character! Which is true? No testimony has been adduced on the part of the accused. The facts elicited from the complainant, on cross examination, have rendered it unnecessary. I affirm boldly, and I shall be sustained by all that hear me; that the facts, as they have finally come from his lips, are in precise conformity with her statement. One gentleman has expressed himself grieved at what has fallen from my son, bearing upon the complainant. Another has insisted that all that we do or say should be governed by the "law of love." If your sympathies are all on that side, in favor of the complainant, and against the accused, I may fail to produce the impression, which appears to me to result from the development of the facts. I desire gentlemen to hear and judge, as those who are to render an account at

* It is impossible for the reporter to do anything like justice to this speech. The speaker consumed something more than two hours.

a future day. If this is a church of Christ, our Master is here present in the midst of us. If there is obliquity in either of our hearts, he sees it clearly. His eye cannot be deceived. If I may appear to treat the complainant with some severity, duty to the accused impels me to speak of things as they are. I did not make the testimony or the case. Both are of his making, and I shall not shrink from such commentaries as are demanded by the position in which he has placed himself, and in which he has placed the party accused.

Before the cross examination had commenced, and after the complainant had gone through with his statement of facts, which sustained the charge, as he had previously spread it upon paper, having been fully apprised of the facts, as they really existed, I enquired of him whether, leaving off there, his conscience was easy, and whether he was fully satisfied that he had stated and exhibited the matter fairly. To this he replied affirmatively. How far he had regarded either the law of truth, or the "law of love," you will judge. A witness should give the whole truth. If he withholds a part, and what he does say thereby produces an erroneous impression, it may have all the injurious effects of direct falsehood, and is scarcely less reprehensible, in the minds of those, who are capable of accurate moral discrimination. I put it to the consciences of all who hear me, was this mutilated statement, either in the written charge, or in the testimony as first given, by which it was attempted to be supported, justified by the "law of love," to which my attention has been called? The case, as it has developed, in point of fact is very dissimilar, and in spirit altogether so, from this charge. And how does the complainant excuse his very extraordinary omission of the facts, elicited upon cross examination? He says he considered them "neutralized" by the stubbornness indicated by saying, that she would be ground to powder, before she would be dictated to or controlled, where she thought she was right. The phrase used by her might not be well chosen. She is in character remarkably frank and unreserved. They were conversing at a

visit professedly friendly. She could not have anticipated that what she said was to go before the public. But whatever may be said of the phrase, the idea, expressive as it was of a firm determination to justify herself, where she had acted with conscious rectitude, which the complainant admits she did, instead of being censurable was to be commended.

Under these circumstances, what did the "law of love," which has been invoked, require? There was no occasion for haste. She had told him, that there would probably be no more dancing until next winter. Again, I ask, if the complainant had been influenced by the "law of love," might it not have been expected, that he would have gone to the pastor of the church and would have said to him, brother, Mrs. Weston is in an error. I, who know I am right, have visited her without effect. She is honest, and she thinks she is right. You must visit her and pray with her, but don't do it now. She is nervous and agitated—wait until she becomes composed and cool, and she will come right at last. But no, the "law of love" impelled to immediate action. On the very next evening, it constrained the complainant to take a friend with him and serve an official monition upon the accused. The "law of love" still goaded him on in its vindictive career and would not suffer him to pause. Such was the haste, with which the charge was penned, that it misrepresents some of the facts and suppresses others, bearing materially upon the case. Was the "law of love," as understood here, carried out in this course of proceeding? At the earliest possible moment, within two days, at the next meeting of the church, the charge is preferred in due form. Is the "law of love" yet satisfied? Oh no! The accuser forthwith, without any delay, as the thunder clap follows the lightning's flash, moves that his victim be excluded from the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was to be administered on the next Sabbath.* And to this you acceded.

* One is reminded of the following lines from Hudibras :—

"And prove their doctrines orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks ;

If this is an exemplification of your "law of love," God forbid that I should ever be in the exercise of it. I am informed that this course is not in conformity with ecclesiastical usage. I know that in all other courts, except the Inquisition, the accused is presumed to be innocent, until proved to be guilty. One respectable gentleman here present advised against that measure as one not in accordance with the law of love. Sir, my heart warms to that gentleman. That law has a place in his bosom, and he exemplifies it in his practice. But to return to the testimony of the complainant.

What did he require of the party accused? That she should say *she was sorry for what she had done*, when he admits, she had acted with *conscious rectitude*. I shall take it upon me to call things by their right names, let its effect be what it may. If she had submitted to become a hypocrite, at his bidding, she, whose heart and tongue had always gone together, he would have been satisfied, and we should have been relieved from this investigation. How many hypocrites of this stamp, he may have made, I know not, but to make her one, I am happy to be able to say, exceeded his power. I affirm, then, that taking the case, as it comes from the complainant's own mouth, the charge has signally failed, and that the accused, and not himself, is truly the party aggrieved.

The accused is charged with violating the report, which has made so great a figure in your discussions. So far as the opinion of the church is embodied in the form of definite resolves, this cannot be pretended. In legislative bodies and in deliberative assemblies, it is not

Call fire, and sword, and desolation,
 A godly, thorough reformation,
 Which always must be carry'd on,
 And still be doing, never done :
 As if religion were intended
 For nothing else but to be mended.
 A sect, whose chief devotion lies
 In odd, perverse antipathies :
 In falling out with that or this,
 And finding something still amiss."

unusual to ascertain the sense of the body upon any subject of general interest, which is first submitted to the consideration of a committee. An opinion thus expressed is suffered to remain in that shape, or it is carried out by positive enactment, in the form of law. Unless this is done, the mere opinion expressed has no coercive effect. Gentlemen must have noticed the disagreement, which exists, as to the true intent and meaning of this report. The committee, who framed it, do not understand it alike. One of them says, that the charge, as preferred, is not warranted by the report. The complainant, the other member of the committee, says the report is as plain as the decalogue, and that it fully sustains the charge. There is as little agreement as to the protestations and qualifications, made by several members, when they voted for its acceptance. The pastor was understood to say, that consistency would not require that church discipline should follow. He now explains by saying, that he meant that the church would have power to determine whether, in point of expediency, such a course should be taken, but as the report is based upon the gospel, which fairly understood, forbids this amusement, the church were at liberty to proceed to disciplinary measures, if they think proper.

A law, which is to be the basis of criminal animadversion, should be clear. No civilized community punishes, where there can be any reasonable doubt, as to the meaning of the law, or whether it has been violated. The law, under which the charge is preferred, being so singularly obscure, that its very framers do not understand it alike, will you require that this lady, in the seclusion of her family, occupied with her domestic concerns, and in administering to the comfort and happiness of all who come near her, should understand it, at her peril, and as she would avoid the consequences of your high displeasure?

The very obscurity and uncertainty of the law, ought to protect her from the charge, and would, I undertake to say, in any other than an ecclesiastical court.

I now address myself to the pastor of this church. You have, sir, frequently addressed me, you will now permit me to make a few remarks to you. We are all, I suppose, equal here. I am nearly three score years of age, and must claim the right to speak freely. You have said, that the report in question was adopted, because it was believed that dancing was forbidden by the gospel. If my wife can be favored with an inspection of the passage or passages, which prove this fairly, and not by a strained construction, such as may be resorted to, to justify the measures of the Inquisition, I venture to assure you that she will not stand out another moment, but will at once express her penitence, for having permitted a violation of the law of Christ, however unwittingly. The canon of the scripture has been long completed, and the doctrine it contains is more than eighteen hundred years old. What is sinful now, has been equally so from the time of your first appearance among us. You know that this amusement has been long practised here. How has it happened that you have not long ago denounced it as a sin? You are by no means remarkable for withholding reproof, public or private. You knew that I had sent all my children, who with one exception, have received the ordinance of baptism at your hands, to schools, to be regularly trained to participate in this amusement at proper times and places. You have never admonished me, or Mrs. Weston, who united with me in this course, as it was your duty to do, upon your own principles, that in so doing we were not only committing sin ourselves, but were leading our own children into sin, and thereby endangering the salvation of their immortal souls. How is it, as it was a practice long prevalent in your parish, and even among the children of your church, that you have not been in the habit of sounding the alarm from the pulpit, and of thus exerting all possible influence in recalling your spiritual children from the devious paths, in which they had gone astray. If they were unwittingly in error, it was your duty to enlighten their con-

sciences. By omitting this duty, you suffered sin upon them.

I never heard you preach against this amusement, until about the time of the commencement of the late discussion in the church, upon the question.

It is one of the charges, preferred by your brother against my son, that he had manifested disrespect to you, by saying that you had, on that occasion, forestalled the opinion of the church. But the error truly was, if the gospel forbids that amusement, that you had left your people so long uninstructed upon that point, that whether it was sinful or not, became a matter of protracted discussion, even in the bosom of the church.

What the gospel clearly or fairly forbids, so far as it depended on you, should not have been treated as a questionable matter. To say then that in such a case, you had forestalled the opinion of the church, was so far from an imputation upon you, that it implied that you had at length awakened to a proper sense of long neglected duty. As a spiritual watchman, you should long since have sounded the alarm, upon this sinful practice.

If the watchman bloweth the trumpet, and the party in danger will not take heed, his blood is upon his own head. But if the watchman seeth the danger, and blow not the trumpet, and any perish unwarned, their blood will be required at his hands.

But, sir, I can make a better apology for your long delay than, upon the ground you now assume, you would dare to make for yourself. That dancing is forbidden by the gospel, is a new discovery. It is in certain societies, one of the ultra fashionable religious opinions of the day. My wife has for nearly half a century made the bible her study, often with deep and prayerful attention, and she has failed to make the discovery. It has not been revealed to me, although the bible is a familiar book, and I yield to no one, who hears me, in reverence for its contents. The former pastor of this church, a man who feared God, and lived and died without reproach, could not find it. The parents of this lady,

both long members of this church, approved of dancing on suitable occasions. So did her grandparents, eminent servants of God, now in heaven, whose standard of piety was so high, that you cannot justly claim to have gone beyond it.

I was educated, sir, at Dartmouth, a strictly orthodox institution. Its influence was felt far and wide, and the neighborhood, where it was located, was remarkable for great purity of manners. I know that the children of the clergyman there, of the President and of the Professors, were permitted to participate freely in this amusement, and its innocence and propriety was never questioned. Did this learned body disregard the injunctions of the gospel? Did they suffer unrepented sin in their children, and in the youth committed to their charge? or has it been an institution blessed of God in its moral influence, furnishing from time to time pastors to His church, who have become its brightest ornaments.

What the law of Christ has not forbidden, does not become sinful in consequence of the declared opinion of this church. Christ is our master and legislator. I deny that we possess legislative power. We have no right to enjoin what Christ has not enjoined, or to forbid what He has not forbidden. I ask permission to read a passage or two from a late work of Dr. Wayland, President of Brown University, on the limits of human responsibility. He has justly remarked, that it is fairly and legitimately, sufficiently awful and appalling, without seeking to extend or enlarge its limits.

When treating of ecclesiastical associations, he says, "men have no right to form a society on the principle that the majority can control the conscience of the minority, or interfere with the rights and duties of parents and children, or of husbands and wives."

Of a christian church he says, "though each man enters it voluntarily, and all are under law, yet they have no right whatever to make laws for themselves; they must both form and govern the association, by the

laws which Christ has made for them. A willingness to obey his laws, gives a man a *right* to admission. So long as this willingness continues, he has a *right* to remain. No one but Christ has any right to impose laws upon him. So long as he obeys Christ, he is free of his brethren, as much as they are of him. Men by uniting in a church with their fellow disciples, promise merely to obey Christ; they submit to Him and not to each other. They surrender to each other no right to make laws for each other. They claim no right to enforce any laws but the laws of Christ; and to attempt to enforce any other, is to act in direct violation of the spirit of the association."

Again, he says, "they have formed a society, of which Christ is the sole legislator. The only power, which they have on each other, is to enforce upon each other obedience to His laws. These laws they may enforce upon His authority. Whatever He has commanded, they may command, and they may do it upon His authority. They have no discretionary power, either to add to, or to take from, any thing, which He has enacted. To His authority every member is obliged to bow, but he is obliged to bow to no other."

And again—"if we surrender the doctrine that Christ is the sole legislator for every individual of His church, and allow that the church may itself make laws binding on the conscience of the individual, what is the result? We become Catholics at once. This is the very essence of the Romish error."

I put it then to the church, dare you proceed against a member upon laws of your own making, going beyond the law of Christ?

Are you sure your grasp is upon one of the tares? God has commanded that the tares and the wheat should grow together unto the harvest, and that there should be no attempt to root out the former lest the wheat should be pulled up also. But are you sure your grasp is upon one of the tares? If it should happen to be a plant of a different character, with what

confusion would you meet the accused before the judgment seat of Christ. I do believe in my conscience, that if our common Master were now to manifest himself, he would deliver your victim from your hands.

One gentleman, who, as I understand, had the principal hand in framing the report, says, that although he admits the charge cannot be sustained upon that document, it may upon the usage of four fifths, if not nine tenths of the evangelical churches. I suppose I know in what sense he uses the term evangelical church, and to meet the argument I mean to use it in the same sense. That gentleman has been a resident here but ten or twelve years, and cannot therefore, from recollection, go so far back in our ecclesiastical history, as I am able to do. Some reminiscences upon this point may not be inappropriate. This was not originally an evangelical church or society, nor was it such at the time of the settlement of the present pastor, to whom I would now make a few suggestions.

It was not then, I repeat it, when you were settled, an evangelical church. Some gentlemen who officiated at your ordination, would not now, I presume, be invited into your pulpit.* When preaching on probation, your peculiar sentiments were not so well understood, if indeed they were so clearly avowed, as they were after you had received a call. I was at that time a member of the church and society, and I well recollect the occurrences, as they took place. When your sentiments

* The man who first spoke in the meeting house of this society, was Professor NORTON of Cambridge. The house was "dedicated" by Dr. NICHOLS of Portland. At the ordination of the Rev. Benja. Tappan, the neighboring "orthodox" clergymen were not invited to officiate. The "charge" was given by Dr. PACKARD of Wiscasset, the right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Mr. PARKER of Dresden, and the introductory prayer was made by Dr. CHANNING. The following extract from Dr. Packard's charge on that occasion, may not be inappropriate :—

"WITHOUT LORDING IT OVER GOD'S HERITAGE, OR ASSUMING DOMINION OVER THE FAITH AND CONSCIENCES OF CHRISTIANS, you will devoutly aim to preserve the order and maintain the discipline, which the Lord Jesus Christ evidently required in his church, and which in former ages he has graciously owned and blessed."

were clearly understood, (and if before misapprehended, whose fault it was, I do not take it upon me to say,) very serious doubts were entertained whether the proposed connection between you and the society ought to be carried into effect. The committee, to whom the subject was referred were divided upon the question, and it is well understood that Judge Cony, a member of it, could give the casting and decisive vote.

He declared, that his opinion and judgment were opposed to your settlement, but that he yielded both to the tears of his two daughters, one of whom is the lady now on trial, and the other is her younger sister, who sits near her. We are both fathers, and know something of the force of parental affection, of which the fact, to which I have alluded, affords signal proof. Since that period, you know very well that Mrs. Weston has been the steady friend both of yourself and your brother, the complainant, and with respect to him, in the first instance, principally because of his relation to you. He will bear me witness, that for nearly twenty eight years, the eye of that lady has been uniformly turned upon him with friendly interest, and that she has never met him but with a smile, not even excepting his two last visits.

Since the period to which I have referred, her head has become grey, your head has become grey, my head has become grey, and the period of life, which remains to us, is indeed contracted to a narrow span. There sits the mother with her children. She is meek, unpretending and unobtrusive, most ardently engaged in the support of the cause of Christ in the world, but she has a strong unbending spirit where she acts with conscious rectitude, which her accuser admits she does, even in the very matter of which he complains.

And now after the lapse of nearly an age, since your settlement, you think you have caught her in the meshes of your law, your brother thinks he has caught her, and perhaps it may turn out so. Such is the instability of human friendship, even when supposed to have the

cement of religion. She will have such deliverance, as God may please to vouchsafe. If she has made her peace with Him, it is of very little consequence what man may do.

But although this was not an evangelical church, all the new members, taking the tone of their spiritual teacher, and the current of ultraism setting very strong, it is probably now a church of that description. The old fashioned Arminians and the moderate Calvinists are driven off to the Unitarians, or driven in to the high toned fashions, which have been set by certain persons, who claim to be spiritual leaders. Christian liberty and christian charity are, compared with adhesion to these fashions, of secondary consequence. It is but too apparent, that those who claim for themselves freedom of thought and action in matters not regulated by the law of God, can have no peaceable and quiet communion or fellowship with you. Unconditional submission or separation is their only alternative.

In matters of faith and conscience, the right of private judgment is the very corner stone of Protestantism. If this is denied to us, it matters little from whom the inhibition comes, whether from the church of Rome, or from any other church, who demand equal submission to what they may be pleased to require, notwithstanding the protestations of others. To these demands, we can never yield. It would be abandoning at once both the citadel of Protestantism and of christian liberty. I have long regarded it as cause of deep gratitude to Almighty God, that we have in our hands, in a language that we can understand, the revelation of His will from heaven, and that in reading and meditating upon it, there is none to molest or make us afraid. The protection of the civil law is thrown around us. It no longer lends its aid to religious persecutions. The experience, which mankind have derived from the excesses of the past, will prevent a return of those scenes, until the light of history is first extinguished.

You are men too fearless and determined to pause in

the career, upon which you have entered. I understand mankind too well to expect it. All the indications, which have been presented to my eye and my ear, are of a different character. Whatever may be your right, you have a majority numerically, which gives you the power to determine as you please. We are perfectly aware that our connection with you cannot be continued. You will consider whether it may not be best, that we part in peace. But I now admonish you, that if you attempt to throw a stigma upon the accused, because she would not belie her conscience and submit to your dictation, we shall extract its sting by appealing to the tribunal of public opinion, a course at least as much to be deprecated by you as by us.*

Adjourned to Tuesday evening, May 12th.

* Had the vote been taken this evening, such was the effect produced by the defence, that the accused would probably have been discharged. The reporter is sure that the control of the leaders was for the moment lost, and that there was a general feeling that the accused had been deeply wronged. The unceasing activity, however, of these gentlemen, through the breathing spell which this adjournment for a few days allowed, brought things round again. The forces were apparently reorganized. The impression now created gradually decreased, and on the next evening the majority of the church was ready to surrender its own sense of propriety to the dictation of their spiritual guides.

CHAPTER VIII.

"—————Then, if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed."

Hamlet.

"An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he imagineth how to throw thee into a pit; he will weep with his eyes, but if he find opportunity, he will not be satisfied with blood."

Ecclesiasticus xii, 16.

"Though he humbleth himself, and go crouching, yet take good heed and beware of him." *Ecclesiasticus xii, 11.*

"And when he was accused of the CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS, he ANSWERED NOTHING. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? AND HE ANSWERED HIM TO NEVER A WORD, insomuch that the Governor marvelled greatly." *Matt. xxvii, 12, 13, 14.*

Tuesday evening, May 12th.

The pastor said that Judge Weston, on the last meeting, had addressed some remarks to him, to which he wished to reply. He then produced a paper which he had prepared, of which the following is a copy.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE PASTOR.

"Question proposed by Judge Weston.—Why did you not make known your views, respecting the evil of dancing, and as a spiritual watchman, blow the trumpet upon this subject, sooner?

In answer to this enquiry, I would state, that it pleased God, at a very early period of my ministry, to excite by His spirit, as I humbly trust, accompanying His word, an unusual interest in the subject of religion. Several persons were convinced of sin, and converted, hopefully to God. Indeed before I was ordained, though not until I had preached in this place for a number of Sabbaths, Mrs. Weston and her sister, to whom Judge Weston alluded, before (as I believe) I had had any

particular conversation with them, were made, as is believed, the subjects of renewing grace. Hence their anxiety to secure for themselves and others, evangelical preaching."

[The paper then goes on with extracts from Mrs. W.'s account of her "experience," from which, it appears, that prior to the period alluded to above, Mrs. W. had made up her mind to join the church, (the privilege of having her children baptized, being a strong inducement,) and was received into it, together with her husband, "in May 1810, with exemption from immediate attendance at the Lord's table." Afterwards, having more just views of the magnitude of the responsibility of becoming a church member, she publicly joined the church again, in company with her sister and four others, in May 1812; and came to the communion table—from which, Mr. T. thinks it was to all an occasion of "sincere regret that anything should have occurred to keep her away."

It further appeared from the same account that, before Mr. T. preached here, Mrs. W. had come to the conclusion that she had wasted too much time in amusements, and left off going to "assemblies" for two or three years; but after that time, attended them again. Afterwards, however, in the winter of 1810-11—the first winter of Mr. T.'s preaching here—her more serious views returned and she declined attending "assemblies."

Mr. T. then goes on to make copious extracts from Mrs. Ingraham's (Mrs. W.'s sister) account of her "experience," from which it appears that her views of the injurious tendency of "assemblies" and "balls," were much stronger than those of Mrs. W.; and not only so, she speaks of "dancing" (a word which does not occur in Mrs. W.'s account) in a way to justify the conclusion that she thought it had better be abandoned entirely.]*

* The portion of Mr. T.'s paper, contained in brackets, faithfully represents the substance of the extracts, taken from Mrs. W.'s and her sister's

"Thus," Mr. T.'s paper continues, "were these persons led to view the subject of *dancing*, when their minds were enlightened, and their hearts (as we hope) renewed by the spirit of God. *Their dancing days were over then.* Other minds were affected soon after in the same way, without any preaching or conversation of mine upon that particular subject. And why should *I* preach upon the subject, when the spirit of God was preaching so much more effectually than I could?*" For

accounts. We have chosen to give them in our own language, because there would be an impropriety in publishing statements of ladies originally intended for the eye of the pastor alone. We have taken pains to have a copy of Mr. T.'s paper, made and compared by two witnesses, and any christian friend who wishes to satisfy himself of the faithfulness of the representation here given, can have the privilege of examining it.

* The accounts of Mrs. W. and sister (which Mr. T. had hunted up, and from which he made extracts,) written under strong religious feeling, were intended, originally, for the eye of Mr. T. alone; but shortly after, at a small church meeting, *held at their father's house*, they were read by Mr. T. *he having first obtained their consent so to do.* Now if he felt himself obliged, at that time, to consult these ladies, before venturing to read their accounts, *how much more* should he have felt that obligation twenty eight years afterwards, when the church was not only increased, but when there were not half a dozen members who were such when they joined. But this is of small consequence, compared with the jesuitical development contained in this paper of Mr. T.'s; and the reporter earnestly begs the attention of the reader to the part of this note which follows, as it will do much to show the tortuous nature of that man's mind, and expose to the light an attempted deception, upon which all high toned minds will look with disgust.

It seems that Mrs. Weston, in her account of her personal experience, had spoken of "assemblies" as unsuitable for the christian. On this subject, her opinions have undergone no change. She still thinks their influence bad, and considers that young people whose parents allow the social and domestic dance at home, are less likely to attend them. [See page 54, where she suggests this idea to Dea. T.] Her opinions do, and always have coincided with those in the "Vindication;" and there is nothing in her paper, which can be tortured into disapprobation of the social dance of children and young people. Of this Mr. T. was well aware. It appears, however, that Mrs. Ingraham, in her account, not only expressed disapprobation of "balls and assemblies," but went further and spoke of "danc-

several years afterwards, there was very little dancing among us, and it was sometimes made a complaint against me (though the effect was, in truth, produced by an infinitely higher Power,) that I had broken up

ing" in terms of disapproval. Now by connecting with the extracts from Mrs. W.'s paper, those from Mrs. Ingraham's, the *impression was produced* that *both* were opposed to all kinds of dancing when they joined the church. Is it possible that this was designed? What follows leaves this beyond a doubt. "Thus," says he, "were *these* persons led to view the subject of dancing when their minds were enlightened," &c. *Bear in mind*, that Mrs. W. was at the bar of the church for allowing children to dance; and that this portion of Mr. T.'s paper is a reply to the question put by her husband, which was in effect—why, if Mrs. W. did wrong by allowing this dance, he had not proclaimed the evil of dancing sooner. In order to make his reply conclusive *it was necessary* to make the church believe that Mrs. W. when under the influence of God's Spirit, was opposed to the dancing which she then allowed; and then he could say, "why should I preach upon the subject, when the Spirit of God was preaching so much more effectually than I could?"

But there is, in this remarkable document, a worse feature, if possible, than the one of which we have spoken. Mr. T. says—"thus were these persons led to view the subject of dancing when their minds were enlightened," &c. "*Their* dancing days were over *then*." ("Their" and "then" being underscored in the original.) Did he not mean by this that their opinions had undergone a change? He could not have meant that they had personally, at their age, commenced dancing. He is an educated and intelligent man, and understands, as well as any body, the force of language. Must not then every honest, straight forward man conclude that he meant to imply *that their views were changed*? Now we have already seen that there was no ground for supposing Mrs. W.'s views to have changed. But what will be the astonishment of the reader to learn that Mrs. Ingraham's were unchanged also! She still thinks that children should be kept from this amusement, if possible, and has never allowed dancing in her house. Her views coincide with those in Mr. Dole's Report, AS MR. TAPPAN KNEW, *both from his long acquaintance with her, AND FROM THE FACT THAT THE NEXT DAY AFTER THAT REPORT WAS PRESENTED, SHE WROTE HIM A NOTE, EXPRESSING HER APPROBATION OF THE VIEWS THERE PRESENTED, AND REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COPY IT.*

Since writing the above, the reporter has requested Mrs. Ingraham to procure him a copy of the note referred to. She thereupon applied to Mr. T. for it, but received for answer that it had got mislaid, but that it should

the amusement. At length, however, a ball was occasionally got up; now and then a private dancing party; and by and by a dancing school was opened. Whether I have said all upon the subject, since the practice has

be sent to her as soon as it could be found. She has, however, written a note from recollection, which she says contains the *same ideas*, and, as she thinks, *the exact language of the original*, now amongst Mr. T.'s papers. Here it is:—

“REV. MR. T.—.

Dear Sir—I should be much obliged if you would lend me the Report on dancing, which was read in the vestry last evening, with which I was much pleased, as I should be glad to copy it (if it would not be improper) so as to have it to read at my leisure. I have no object in view, in requesting it, but my own benefit, and, it may be, that of my children. I will return it directly.

Yours, &c.

A. G. INGRAHAM.”

And yet, with her uniform practice through life before him, and with this additional proof in his possession, that the views of her earlier years remained unaltered, he held her up, at a full church meeting, as recreant to her former professions: and she was sometimes taunted, afterwards, by Mr. T.'s adherents, with her “*change of views*.”

Why was this injured lady dragged into a case with which she had nothing to do, and thus misrepresented? Was it because that, though against dancing, and claiming for herself, upon that subject, freedom of opinion, she cheerfully accorded the same liberty to others? Was it because she did not hesitate to say that the present course of the church was a gross violation of the pledges given by Mr. T. and Mr. Dole, at the time of the acceptance of the Report?

Be the cause what it may, here are the facts—each of which is susceptible of proof.

In the first place, Mr. T. deliberately represented Mrs. W. as having professed in writing, at the time she joined the church, opinions inconsistent with her conduct in allowing the social dance at her house, **WHEN THE PAPER FROM WHICH HE EXTRACTED CONTAINED NO SUCH OPINIONS.**

In the next place, he deliberately represented Mrs. Ingraham as false to professions made in writing at the time she joined this church, **WHEN HE WELL KNEW THAT THE FACT WAS OTHERWISE.** Of these facts, as well as of all others stated in this volume, the reporter is able to furnish ample proof.

The reporter dares not trust himself to comment upon these facts. Let them be carefully scrutinized by a discerning community, which will, undoubtedly, mete out the just measure of indignation demanded.

been revived among us, that I ought to have said, is in my own mind a matter of doubt. I have always supposed that my opinions respecting it, were well understood; and that the consciences of those, who participated in the amusement, were, generally speaking, against them. *Their* impression, I doubt not, very generally, has been, that, if they embraced religion, they must relinquish that amusement; and when they have been urged to give up the sinful pleasures of the world for Christ, they have understood *this* amusement as included. I have not therefore supposed it obligatory to specify this amusement particularly; and if not obligatory, have not thought it expedient. I have from time to time, conversed with individuals upon the subject privately—presenting such considerations, as were suited to strengthen the convictions of conscience, and to dissuade them from a practice, injurious to their spiritual interests.

With respect to the course proper for christian parents to pursue, in relation to their children, my expectation was, that they would not be disposed to train up their children to a practice which some of them at least had found a mighty obstacle to their own conversion. But I perceived, several years since, that there was a diversity of sentiment and practice, on the subject, among the members of the church, and I did not feel myself called upon publicly to give my views respecting it, in opposition to those entertained by some of *them*, whom I respected and esteemed. With several parents I have conversed; with others I have not. They have sent their children to dancing school, perhaps before I knew that they had any thoughts of so doing—and after that, it seemed too late to speak, with any prospect of success; or I supposed that their belief was too firmly established, to yield to any arguments that I might offer.

In some instances, the father not being a professor of religion, I have supposed that he had sent his children when the mother would have preferred a different course, and have not for that reason considered it my duty to

admonish her. On the whole, however, I dare not arrogate to myself in this particular or in any other, the character of a watchman, always and perfectly faithful. Far from it. Oh, that I could take you to record, that I am pure from the blood of all men. Beloved brethren and sisters of this church, I ask your forgiveness of my many delinquencies, and your prayers for me, that the blood of souls may not be found in my skirts and required at my hand. I have long been very desirous, that parents in this church might be united in sentiment and practice upon the subject under consideration: and when the matter was referred to a committee, hoped, that this measure would be conducive to such a result.

When the report of the committee was made, so much time was occupied in discussing the propriety of dancing, *on the part of church members*, as to leave very little (without continuing our discussions much longer than was thought advisable) for that free conversation, which I had hoped for, upon the subject of parental duty; yet there did seem to be a very general agreement in the position, that "all suitable means should be used to restrain our children from dancing as generally practised."

Whether the declaration of this sentiment is a proper basis of church discipline, is a point, upon which I have not *intended*, on a former occasion, to express an opinion any further, than simply to say, that in my judgment it would be proper, if an instance were known of a member's acting in opposition to it, kindly to *inquire* respecting the matter—to ask the reason why—and then to act, or to forbear acting as the laws of Christ, our responsibility to Him, and our obligations to each other should seem to require.

In regard to the usage of churches, with respect to an attendance at the Lord's table, of members, against whom a complaint has been preferred, Judge Weston remarked, that I ought to have known, what it was. I thought I did to some extent, and expressed myself accordingly. The truth is that congregational churches

claim independence of each other—and that no code of *laws* with respect to such matters, recognized as binding, is in existence. Of *usages* there is some *diversity*; and I spoke cautiously *because I did not know, and had not the means of knowing, what the usage, on that particular point was to any considerable extent*. One point of some importance in this particular case, should perhaps have been mentioned before—that one of the persons complained of, being present at the meeting, was particularly desirous that there should be some expression of the views of the church, and that the decision of the question should not be left to the individuals themselves. Thus urged to decide, the brethren did express their belief of what *they conceived to be proper* in such cases—whether correctly or not, it is not for me to determine.*

I will briefly answer to one topic more, and then conclude. After speaking of the influence of Mrs. Weston and her sister, in procuring my settlement in this place (a subject which I can never contemplate without deep interest)—and then—of the position in which Mrs. Weston now stands—Judge W. added—“such is poor human nature—such are human friendships, even when supposed to be cemented by religion.” If by so saying he intended to intimate, that from being a friend, I have become an enemy to those esteemed and beloved individuals, who under God, decided probably the question whether this place should be my field of labor, and in connection with this the far more important question whether the doctrines of grace, the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, should here be preached, and souls converted to God, by His blessing upon the preaching of them, (and this was the light in which they viewed the subject)—I do not plead guilty to the charge. God forbid that I should ever look upon any person, whose spiritual welfare I have been made instrumental of promoting—and especially upon those whom I have been

* See page 40 for Mr. T.'s remark on usage;—page 41 for D. C. Weston's remarks, referred to;—and page 43 for the resolution passed; and carefully compare them with what is here stated.

accustomed to regard, as the first fruits of my ministry, who have exerted so important an influence upon my destiny, and have laid as it were the foundation for whatever of enjoyment I have experienced, or of good I may have been enabled to do among this people, with *enmity* or even with indifference. May heaven's choicest blessings come on them and theirs; and *if*, as has been said, in relation to one of them and her family, "*we must part*," most heartily do I concur in the wish that we may "*part in peace*."

D. C. WESTON. After reading those extracts from papers formerly written by Mrs. W. and Mrs. Ingraham, you went on to read—"thus were these persons led to view the subject of dancing when their minds were enlightened, &c. *Their dancing days were over then*,"—thus conveying the impression that their views were different now. Does Mrs. W., in her paper, speak against the dancing of children and young people, or only against balls?

PASTOR. She refers to assemblies.

D. C. W. Precisely the same thing. Her opinions now are the same as then. That is not the kind of dancing now under consideration, and of course those extracts have no bearing on the case.

PASTOR. I think they have.

C. DOLE'S REMARKS.

C. DOLE said that serious principles and important duties were involved; and that it was important we should have the spirit of Christ. If he should say anything worthy of censure, he hoped he should be rebuked. Whatever he had seen in the course of this investigation, contrary to the law of love, he should rebuke.

A case of church discipline ought not to be conducted like an indictment in a court of law. But everything should be done according to the law of love. There should be no panting for victory—no resort to carnal feelings. One party must not stand on the *offensive* and the other on the *defensive*. What was the course pre-

sented in the Bible? He would illustrate. Dr. Snell does something contrary to the law of love. He goes to him and says "brother have you done this? Perhaps the answer is "I have." He tells him that his conduct has caused him grief. If Dr. S. is penitent and says he is sorry for what he has done, the affair is settled forever. If Dr. S. is stubborn and refuses to listen to him, he would go to him with a brother perhaps without effect. Up to this point the church are ignorant of the affair. If still unsuccessful he must present it to the church.

When presented, he thought it the duty of the church to *suspend* from communion. [Here he read an extract from an English writer by the name of James, which supported this position. But a note by the *American* editor was read, in which it was stated that the practice was not uniform.]

As to the investigation. He never knew a case where evidence was required. The accuser and the accused converse together, and the church sit by to see that the former does not demand too much, and that the latter does not withhold what ought to be given. Everything should be done with meekness, frankness, candor, a forgiving spirit, and yearning of heart.

He had hitherto been called upon to deal with those whom he thought sincerely pious—whose souls he would have been willing to have placed in his soul's stead, and had at length felt obliged to lift his hand in favor of their excommunication. It did not take a great sin to keep one out of heaven.

What was the next inquiry presented to us? In this case, *he did not wish to take into consideration anything on our records.* It was entirely immaterial whether the accused had acted contrary to a rule or not. Neither was it necessary to show that she had infringed any express command of the Bible. There were many things wrong which were not forbidden by that book—to wit, forgery and the like.

He would now give his views of this case. Here the law of love was supposed by the complainant to be vio-

lated. He does not complain of the words and acts themselves, but the *spirit* which they manifested. Whatever might have been the confusion of the Report, the complainant regarded these acts as conflicting with the opinions of many of the church. On the point of the *temper* of the accused, he wanted more light. He could not yet make up his mind. He ought to be permitted to question the accused, either there or *privately*; and he ought to be permitted to converse with her alone. If his wife should offend a brother, and that brother should call to see her, he should feel it his duty to leave the room. It was not according to the spirit of Christ to stand on the defensive and say "we admit nothing. Prove what you can."

In conclusion, he hoped we should all meet in heaven.*

DEA. T. The grief, in this case, was not confined to me. Many were grieved as well as myself. The views of the church are well known. The conduct and speech of Mrs. W. were in opposition to these views. I have not stated all the conversation between us, but the facts in the case are all known.

Of all persons in the world, I should be the last to speak ill of Mrs. W. She has been my patron and friend. But I felt it my duty to complain.

As to seeming contradictions, I think she will acquit me of any bad motives or designs. I have no doubt

*Dea. T. knew best what he complained of, which was that Mrs. W. had acted in opposition to the Report—see complaint and his testimony. But it was clearly proved that when the Report was accepted, pledges were given that parents were not to be compelled to conform to it; and here was Mrs. W. on trial for going contrary to it. How was this to be reconciled? Mr. Dole is an ingenious man, and shrunk not from the task. He didn't care about "anything on our records;" and as for the Report, no matter whether that was moonshine or not. "The words and acts" were not complained of, "but the *spirit* which they manifested." That is to say, parents are not bound by this Report. O no: but if they act contrary to it, it shows such a *bad spirit* that they must be disciplined. This *ruse* took finely with that portion of the church which seemed determined to sustain this prosecution. They immediately breathed more freely. Mrs. W. was not taken up for allowing dancing, but for the "*bad spirit*" which the allowing of dancing manifested.

that, as a witness in a court of justice, I should be disturbed. Perhaps I should not tell my story straight.—I do not intend to vote in the case.

C. DOLE. I wish to pursue the Bible method and converse with the accused. Sister Weston can I have that privilege?

Dr. SNELL, [after a pause.] I was pleased with the remarks of Mr. Dole this evening. There is a general sentiment in the church, that Mrs. W. is a person of real piety. But I am not prepared to act in this case. It seems to me reasonable that she should answer questions, and then I hope the difficulty may be settled. I do not think there is any necessity of *parting*.

We are not dealing with Mrs. W. for the *dancing* in her house, but for the *spirit* which she has shown.

JUDGE W. remarked that he had listened to Mr. Dole attentively. He had been in the habit of judging men a good deal by the eye, and was seldom deceived. There was a great deal of pretension to piety in the manner of that gentleman. He hoped he was as good as he appeared to be. That was a matter between him and his God.

What more, said he, do gentleman want? They have the testimony of the complainant, which sustains the answer of the accused to the crossing of a t, and to the dotting of an i. The "*temper*" which the accused would exhibit *now*, if questioned, would not vary the cause of complaint. That was *past*—gone beyond control as much as what happened before the flood. The question is—has this complaint been properly brought? and, if so, has it been sustained? Did Mrs. W. allow in her house that which was wrong? and, if so, did she exhibit an unchristian temper in her interviews with Dea. T.? On these points you have all the light you ever will have; and the accused calls upon you to say whether she has acted right or wrong. If the church shall decide that she has acted wrong, they can take such steps to reclaim her as they think best. If gentlemen are not satisfied with her conduct, as it now stands,

let them say so. Dea. T. has made a complaint. The testimony to sustain and resist it, is all out. Has it been sustained? I have not succeeded in speaking in so soft a voice as Mr. Dole. I could not do it. Whether that gentleman's heart is as soft as his voice, I cannot determine. I hope it is.

C. DOLE. Perhaps neither Judge Weston nor myself are competent judges of each other's sincerity. I am not ready to act without more light.

Dr. SNELL. I want a committee appointed to converse with Mrs. Weston.

JUDGE W. I say again, Mrs. W. will converse with no one till the church decides, upon her conduct as it stands at present. We do not ask you to decide this case *in favor* of the accused. All we want is that you should *decide* it one way or the other.

What is the object of questioning her? Any one who has read the complaint and has heard the testimony, cannot help seeing that she is complained of *for acting in opposition to the Report*. There is no pretence that she has done wrong in any other way. The only question then to settle is, had she the right to act in opposition to the Report?

C. DOLE, for one, was not ready to act without more light. The church must not be in haste to decide. These cases not unfrequently took from six months to two years.

JUDGE W. You will get no "more light" from Mrs. W.

PASTOR. Whether the church will decide on this case, or take up the others and dispose of them all, together, is for them to determine.

[No one, not present, can form any conception of the trying nature of this evident determination on the part of the pastor and others to delay the decision of the question; and at these attempts to cast a mist over the point at issue. It was almost too much for the nerves of men, and *quite* too much for those of women.

The daughter of the accused, Mrs. Fuller, whose

health was extremely delicate, finding that she was fast losing command of her nerves, attempted to leave the vestry. With assistance, she succeeded in reaching the door, but was there seized with an alarming hysterical affection, and burst into uncontrollable sobs and groans, which drew to the spot the immediate neighborhood, and the passers by. The meeting was breaking up in great confusion, and]

JUDGE W. (turning to the pastor, exclaimed.) This affair *must* be brought to a close. You will kill my wife and daughter. I don't know but you *have* killed my daughter.

Adjourned to Friday evening, May 15.

There seemed to be a combination on the part of the church which, unaccountable then, was afterwards explained. It will be perceived that all reasoning upon the facts—all appeals to their reason and to the common feelings of humanity, seemed to be glinted back like the rays of the sun from polished steel.

Mrs. Fuller, whose feeble frame could no longer bear the intense excitement of these scenes, was confined to her bed, dangerously ill. The family physician, alarmed for her safety, and seeing that repose of mind alone could save her, declared that she could not live a fortnight unless this case was disposed of.

Judge Weston, incensed at the injustice done his wife, and seeing too that there was to be no end to these sessions, and that his daughter's life might be sacrificed, unless they were brought to an end, determined that if the church did not close the affair on the next Friday evening, he and his wife would end it, by withdrawing from a body which, in its headlong career of spiritual domination, seemed to cast justice, humanity, and even *truth* to the winds.

CHAPTER IX.

"When a man hath done, then he beginneth; and when he leaveth off, then shall he be doubtful." Ecclesiasticus xviii, 7.

"For STRANGERS are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them." Ps. liv, 3.

"We're fearfully o'ermatched in discipline;
So even my inexperienced eye can judge.
What succor save in heaven?" *Halidon Hill.*

"BUT WHEN THEY PERSECUTE YOU IN THIS CITY, FLEE YE INTO ANOTHER." Matt. x, 23.

Friday evening, May 15th.

Mrs. INGRAHAM. If it would not be improper, I wish to ask of the Pastor why he read a communication of mine, given to him many years ago? What had it to do with the case before us? I consider it a breach of confidence; and it is my wish that my paper may be restored to my possession. I purposely make this request before the same persons to whom that paper was read.*

PASTOR. The reason of my referring to that paper, on our last meeting, you can ascertain by examining my written statement made at that time.

I consider your communication as the property of the church. When received it was read at a public meeting of the church.

Mrs. I. It was read at your request and by my permission, at a little meeting of members, at my father's house.

PASTOR. Perhaps anything, so exclusively between

* Mrs. Ingraham was not present when Mr. T. read his paper at the last meeting. If any one has the curiosity to see how dangerous it is, in a society like this, to assert that the Pastor can do anything wrong, let him turn to appendix A, and he will there see how these persecutions are carried into all the relations of life.

ourselves, ought not to be allowed to interrupt the business of the meeting.

J. HEDGE said he could not, consent to vote in this case until further reflection and discussion. The church might have done wrong. We were all fallible men. He thought we should yield to the majority.

He spoke at some length about mutual kindness and forbearance; and hoped we should be united and forgive each other. Though not personally acquainted with Mrs. W., he had always understood that she was a very pious woman.

D. C. W. I wish to make a single explanation. An attempt has been made, both *out of*, and in the vestry, to charge me with having brought about the suspension of my mother and sister. The pastor, at the last meeting, insinuated that such was the fact. I wish to set the matter right, by reading the proceedings of the "preparatory lecture" relative to this point. [Here he read extracts from those proceedings—see page 40 and onward.] Perhaps this explanation was unnecessary. I apprehend there are few who can be made to believe that this church is so much under my influence, that, at my single suggestion, it would proceed to suspend one of its oldest members—and that member not present.

DEA. MEANS. The vote passed at that time was't meant as a suspension; and it was stated that it would not apply to Mrs. W.

D. C. W. Why was the vote passed at all?

DEA. M. That I can't say.

D. C. W. So I supposed. You cannot avoid that responsibility. You may change terms as much as you please. Your vote suspended Mrs. W. from communion. What is a suspension? Why it is an exclusion from the communion table. This you accomplished.

I deny that there was any statement that it was not to apply to Mrs. W.

DEA. M. There certainly was; and I should like to have other members state if they did not so understand it.

[Here there was a pause, but no one responded to the call.]

JUDGE W. Fortunately every thing relating to that affair, is in black and white.

Mr. Dole has read from an author to show, that it is proper to *suspend* in the first stage of the proceedings. I will read from Neal's history of the church. [Here he read extracts, showing that the *Puritans* did not suspend from communion, until the crime charged had been *fully* proved.] Such was the course pursued by the *Puritans*, who were generally thought strict enough.

C. DOLE. The vote of this church was not, in my view, a vote of suspension. The persons complained of, might have stopped at communion; and the Deacon would have been obliged to hand the emblems.*

DEA. T. I do not shrink from the responsibility of that vote. After handing in the complaint, I asked for the usage on this point. I felt that I could not meet sister W., and give her the emblems. I thought I could not do it. I still think so, and I made a motion to exclude her from communion. I do not deny it or shrink from it. My motion was withdrawn to give place to Mr. Craig's, which was the *same* thing in a different form, and which was meant to accomplish the same purpose. I voted for it, and do not regret that I did so.†

J. HOOPER. I didn't suppose it a suspension. I should not have voted for it if I had. I knew a suspension would be altogether wrong; and if that was one, I can only say I am sorry.‡

JUDGE W. The testimony is all out, Mrs. W. calls

* See page 47, where he admits it was a suspension. Also, page 98, where he quotes James to show it is proper in such cases; but authorities, the other way, are produced, and lo! this was not a suspension. Dea. T. immediately puts the matter right.

† What becomes of Dea. Means' statement, a little way back, that it was not to apply to Mrs. W.? And also of Mr. Tappan's written insinuation (page 96) that this vote would not have been brought about but for the reporter?

‡ Why did not they repeal the vote? To show the remarkable sincerity of this gentleman, the reader is referred to the motion that HE seconded—(bottom of page 41.)

upon you to say whether she is to blame or not. For the sake of bringing the question before you, *I move that it is the sense of this church that the complaint, filed against Mrs. Weston by Dea. Tappan, has not been sustained.*

W. A. BROOKS. I second the motion.

Dr. SNELL. I am not ready to act. It is said that Mrs. W. expressed regret that she had injured any one's feelings, and that she did not intend so to do. This is enough. It is all that can be required. But Dr. Tappan says that these expressions of regret were *neutralized* by other remarks. Her acknowledgment is amply sufficient, if not *neutralized*. I want more light.

On the last evening but one, Dr. Tappan wanted to put some questions to Mrs. W. and she refused to answer.*

JUDGE W. You may put your mind at rest on that point. She will not submit to be questioned till you have decided whether she is to blame. No moral tortures which you can inflict can extract anything from her, till you have first decided this question. You may make as much of this as you please.

Dr. SNELL (in evident excitement.) I won't act till I get more light.

J. H. HARTWELL. When these complaints were laid upon your table, I begged you would not act precipitately. I cautioned you, and made such suggestions as seemed to me proper. I thought I foresaw some of the consequences which have followed. The church, however, thought differently from myself.

When Dr. Tappan made the inquiry he did about communion, and then followed it up with a motion to

* Dea. T. had stated clearly (page 50) what this "neutralization" was. "*I considered those expressions neutralized by her saying that she would be ground to powder before she would be dictated to by the church.*" Dr. S. had apparently made up his mind to censure Mrs. W. (the reason will appear by and by,) and therefore could not act till it appeared that she was to blame. Nothing had appeared to neutralize her statement, and therefore he wanted "more light." This idea that there was any *neutralization* that had not been stated, was a sheer pretence for delay.

Dea. T.'s intended questions related to "discrepancies." See page 73.

suspend, I was sorry. Mr. Craig moved a postponement, and substituted a motion which amounted to the same thing. But all this has *passed*. We are now called upon to act. The evidence is all out. It is an unpleasant business, and we may as well meet the question now as at any time.

C. DOLE. We have not pursued the Bible method. The parties ought to answer all questions. I have doubts as to what my duty requires, and should sin if I acted with my present light.

The testimony is not all out. The brother who accompanied Dr. T. has made no statements; and Mrs. W. has stated but little. I wish to ask questions.

W. A. BROOKS. What new evidence do you expect?

C. DOLE. Dr. T. was going to state something which was said in Mrs. W.'s presence; but it was objected to unless she assented to it. I want to know everything.

DEA. MEANS labored under the same difficulty with Dr. Snell and brother Dole. Dr. T. had said that certain expressions were "*neutralized*." He wanted to know about it. He wanted to ask a multitude of questions—with what spirit Dr. T. went? And with what spirit he was met. He wanted more light.

JUDGE W. I perceive that gentleman do not mean to act upon this question. Mrs. W. has been dragged here night after night, and it can be submitted to no longer.

WM. A. BROOKS called for a decision of the question, and wished that it might be taken by yeas and nays.

E. ROWSE called for the reading of Mrs. W.'s statement of facts.

C. DOLE didn't think it at all necessary, and thought it would waste time.

JUDGE W. desired that it should be read.

[Here the pastor read the paper alluded to:—for which see page 69.]

DR. SNELL. I want to hear Dr. T.'s statement of what *neutralized* this.*

* See note, page 106.

DEA. T. When I called upon Mrs. W. she received me kindly. I expected it. The visit was pleasant. It could not have been otherwise. She exhibited emotion during the interview. I have not repeated all that passed. I don't remember all. Connected with these kindly feelings was fault finding. She said that this whole affair had been brought about by *meddling* members;* and that I never should have moved in the business if I had not been *forced* or *crowded* into it; that I must have been put up to it. Why, said I, Mrs. W., do you suppose *I was put up to this?*—She disowned, at once, the impression. She said also—"your brother has been here and has talked *very hard* to me." But she did not tell me what he said. There is one thing more, which, perhaps I ought to state. Her son, Daniel, remarked—

JUDGE W. What has that to do with the case? When *he* is on trial you can state that.

D. C. W. Is this course of proceeding in order? The case has been *once* gone through with. The complainant said distinctly [see page 63] he had nothing farther to offer; and the case has been *argued* upon the facts as he left them. This attempt therefore, to introduce new matter after the case has been *overthrown*, as *he* left it, is altogether irregular. If allowed, we must go over the whole ground again, and argue it anew.

JUDGE W. It is *not* right: but let them have their own way. Dea. T. may make any statements he pleases.

Dr. SNELL. I must act as in the presence of my Creator. I see nothing incorrect in Mrs. W.'s statement to the church. It is amply sufficient. But I want to know what the *neutralization* was.†

JUDGE W. According to Mr. Dole, this is an affair

* He had stated this before, page 49.

† In obedience to Dr. S.'s call, just before made, for the *neutralization*, Dea. T. had made some statements which the former had the sagacity to perceive amounted to nothing; and we find him still demanding the "*neutralization*"—a demand, by the way, which never could be gratified; and as he could not vote till it was, of course there was no prospect of *his* ever coming to a decision.

between Dea. T. and Mrs. W.: but it seems some other gentlemen wish to become parties to it. I want this disposed of somehow: I do not care how. *Dea. T.* state anything which *you* think can, by possibility, bear against Mrs. W. Whether it is proper testimony or not, I will leave it *even to your* moral sense to discriminate—which I do not think is very nice.

DEA. T. I have stated all I wish to state. I have nothing more. Those visits were not satisfactory to me. In all I have said, I supposed I was speaking to friends.*

JUDGE W. So Mrs. W. thought. I call for the question.

J. HOOPER. I am not ready to act.

D. C. W. Perhaps the church will excuse Mr. Hooper from voting.

J. HARTFORD. I think we ought to take the question. Some have spoken of the "*temper*" with which Mrs. W. conversed with Dr. T. There is no evidence of any unchristian "*temper*." But suppose there was, it would have nothing to do with the case. If a church member should accuse me of forgery or any other crime, and should come and talk with me about it—and the same man should come again, with a brother, and make the same accusation, and repeat it and reiterate it, and I *should* at last, lose my *temper*, *that* ought not to be brought up in the case. If I am charged before the church with forgery, *that* is the thing to be inquired into, and *not* the "*temper*" with which I had spoken to the accusing parties on those occasions. I wish that this may be settled, and I believe we cannot have peace till it is settled.

C. DOLE. Do you understand, Judge W., that every one who votes against your motion, thereby declares it as his opinion that the complaint has been sustained?

*This was the second time Dea. T. had said he had nothing more to offer, and it shows clearly that this was a mere pretence about there having been any other *neutralization* than that stated, page 50. It was amusing to see these gentlemen raking over the ashes of the conversation which took place at that memorable interview, searching in vain for a coal, that, by assiduous blowing, might be made to furnish "*more light*."

JUDGE W. I do so understand it.

C. DOLE. Then *I move that Judge W.'s motion be laid upon the table.* We ought to have more time. These cases not unfrequently take two years before they are disposed of.

J. HOOPER. I second that motion.

This motion prevailed. Judge W. then immediately rose and read the following document.

THE WITHDRAWAL OF JUDGE AND MRS. WESTON.

"To the South Parish Church, in Augusta.

The subscriber, Paulina B. Weston, has been a member of this church in full communion nearly thirty years. She believes there does not now remain a single resident, active male member of the church, who belonged to it when she joined as a communicant, except the Pastor. Since that period, through the mercy of God vouchsafed in Jesus Christ, she has endeavored to walk according to her covenant engagements. She understands that in October, 1838, the church passed certain resolutions against dancing. So far as her own feelings or practice are concerned, she does not object to these resolutions, except as they may restrain christian liberty by adding to the requirements of the law of Christ, by which alone she covenanted to be governed. It is not pretended that she has violated them. And the truth really is, that although she joined the church in the prime of her youth, she has not danced since that period. Within about two months, a certain report has been prepared by a committee, accepted by the church, and printed by their order, which contains certain reasoning and declarations, which she understands it is insisted every member is bound to obey, under peril of church discipline, whether he or she approve of them or not. Since that period, she herself has permitted a few children to dance at her house an hour and ten minutes, they having worked there the afternoon of the same day in aid of a benevolent object. For this act, as a violation of the body of the report, Deacon Enoch S.

Tappan has preferred charges against her. In her answer, which is now in the possession of the church in writing, to which she refers, she has protested against the jurisdiction of the church, upon this new legislation, which, as she conscientiously believes, has no warrant in the word of God. She feels the pressure and injustice of these new laws, with the more sensibility, as they have been got up and established by members, who have come into the church long since her admission. But notwithstanding her protestation, and notwithstanding the facts, as elicited from the complainant, on cross examination, are in exact conformity with her statement, and although he admits she acted conscientiously, the church have sustained jurisdiction and have continued in five of their sessions to proceed against her. She feels it a duty to resist a yoke thus attempted to be imposed upon her conscience, and also the interference of the church with her conduct in her own family, in a matter, in her judgment, innocent and harmless in itself. As she cannot submit to their laws, where they appear to her very clearly to transcend the law of Christ, she is satisfied that the only remedy, which remains to her, is to withdraw from their communion. In a late publication of President Wayland, on the limits of human responsibility, a work which she takes the liberty to recommend to the consideration of the church, the author says, "a church of Christ is, manifestly, a voluntary association. No man joins it, unless he choose, nor continues in it any longer than he will." She makes her election; and she now notifies you, that her further connection with you is from this time dissolved.

The subscriber, the husband of the party charged, entering into the views and feelings of his wife, and regarding it as his duty also to make a stand for christian liberty, notifies you, that he hereby withdraws from your communion, and declares his connection with you at an end.

(Signed)

PAULINA B. WESTON,
NATHAN WESTON."

May 15, 1840.

Having read the above, and handed it to the Pastor, he left the vestry in company with his wife, whose feelings may be imagined, at thus finding herself compelled to leave the society with which five generations of her family had worshipped. After their departure there was a profound silence for some moments.

D. C. W. then stated the sickness of his sister, and the relief it would be to her mind if her case was disposed of. True she was not present; but in cases where the presence of the accused was impracticable, they undoubtedly had the power to proceed without it. Mrs. Fuller was now confined to her bed; and even were she able to leave it, she probably never could bring her mind to enter the vestry again. He was about to leave town for some weeks, and wished that her case might be taken up before he went, so that he could be present, and protect her rights. It was, to be sure, nearly nine o'clock, but there was no dispute about the facts in the case; and her defence was prepared, which it would take but a short time to read. Dea. T. had complained that she had "both in conversation and practically" disregarded the "Report." This practical disregard, he had explained to mean that she had played upon the piano, for the society of children to dance, at Mrs. W.'s, on the occasion so often spoken of. This was not denied, but the propriety of it defended. If the church would hear her defence, he would read it.

C. DOLE said he should like to have Mr. W. present when Mrs. F.'s case was taken up, and that it could be postponed till his return. There was an objection to taking up her case *now*—which was, that there was a case before them *undisposed* of.

J. H. HARTWELL thought the case of Mrs. W. pretty *nearly* ended.

C. DOLE. I don't know about that.

Adjourned.

CHAPTER X.

"For they intended evil against thee: THEY IMAGINED A MISCHIEVOUS DEVICE, WHICH THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO PERFORM." Ps. xxi, 11.

"For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side."
Ps. xxxi, 13.

"The wisdom he was forty years in gathering
Has left him in an instant." *Halidon Hill.*

What! A man of Mr. Tappan's age and experience, allow his brother to commence an ecclesiastical prosecution against so old a member of his society, for allowing children to dance in her own house! And then stand by aiding and abetting in driving her from the communion-table! And then follow up the affair with such pertinacity as to compel her to leave the church in self defence! Astonishing!

Such were the exclamations uttered on every side; and the situation of the pastor and his associates became embarrassing. They felt that their characters suffered. To acknowledge their error, and retrace their steps, would be an incident unprecedented in the history of persecutions. And to remain silent under the odium excited, was not to be thought of. Mrs. Weston, then, MUST BE PLACED IN THE WRONG, OR THEY WERE UNDONE.

But how? THE ISSUE MUST BE CHANGED; and for this Mr. Dole had already paved the way. He had said that Mrs. W. was under discipline, not for "*the words and acts themselves*," but for the "*spirit which THEY manifested*." This discovery, like all other inventions, was greatly improved upon. They now went farther, (some symptoms of this will have been perceived from Dr. Snell and others, in the previous chapter, in the insinuations that there was some "*neutralization*," &c.), and declared in the ear of the public, *that the amusement of dancing had nothing to do with the it*. Just as when

the vote of suspension was passed. It was proper. Usage required it. On ascertaining that they were mistaken in these points, it was denied that their resolution amounted to a suspension.

So now. At first imagining they had both law and gospel, and, according to Mr. Dole, nine tenths of the evangelical churches on their side, they hoisted the broad pennant of their report, and were determined to make war upon all who did not carry at their mast head the same flag. Finding themselves unsustained in this position, they denied that they had ever cruised at all under that flag. They declared to every one that there *had been no attempt to make Mrs. Weston give up, in her house, the amusement of dancing;—that they never pretended that the report was obligatory; that the public had been misinformed; and that Mrs. W. was under discipline for showing a "bad spirit."**

Among those most active and most interested, to make representations of this kind, were the Pastor and Mr. Dole. So active, indeed, was the former of these gentlemen, gliding into this place and that, and using all the art, of which he is possessed, to induce people to believe his statement of the case, that the remark was not unfrequent that he was born for a politician, and had mistaken his calling. These representations were the more atrocious, inasmuch as they had, as will have been perceived, *no foundation in truth*, but originated solely in the desire to conceal from public indignation, intentions and acts of which they were now heartily ashamed.

The impartial must bear with the reporter, if, at the hazard of being tedious, and at the certainty of performing a work of supererrogation so far as they are concerned, he makes a few remarks, upon this point, for the benefit of the prejudiced and partial, into whose hands this volume may chance to fall.

It will be recollected that Dea. Tappan's testimony

* There were one or two exceptions to this class, who still held fast their integrity; declaring that the church was to be "purified, and sifted of all who allowed dancing, if it did not leave ten remaining."

left no shade upon the christian character of the accused. He did not pretend that she had shown a "bad spirit." At the time when he submitted his case to the church, and said he "had nothing more to offer," all he had proved, and all he thought it necessary to prove, was that *she had allowed dancing, notwithstanding the church had expressed their disapprobation of such amusements, and then refused to comply with the reiterated request, "I want (page 62) you to say you are sorry for what you have done, and that you won't do so again."* Having proved this, he supposed he had made out a case, and did not pretend that he had anything farther against the accused.

"Of all persons in the world (says he, page 99) I should be the last to speak ill of Mrs. Weston."

"She received me (page 49) as usual, kindly and courteously, and appeared perfectly friendly to me."

On being informed that acting according to her views had injured his feelings,—

"She said (says he, page 49) she was very sorry to have injured them."

"I believe she did say (page 49) that she would not, for the world, intentionally injure the feelings of any one."

She "was (page 55) at the close of the evening, a good deal agitated and grieved:" and, according to Mr. Kilburn, (page 56) "she was a good deal agitated, and wept."

She said (page 54) "that the late report, and proceedings of the church, had caused and would cause, great injury to the cause of the Redeemer."

She spoke (page 54) "of the revivals in different parts of the State," and said "that she hoped there would have been one here; but that these movements in the church, she thought, would retard such a blessing."

Is this the language, is this the appearance, of a woman possessed of a "*bad spirit*"?

Was she sincere in these expressions?

"I had (says he, page 54) no reason to distrust her sincerity."

Did she tell her accuser peremptorily, and without giving reasons, that she would not conform to the views of the report? Hear his own testimony.

"She referred (page 48) to her constant practice and opinions as being different from mine; that she had been educated in a way to give her different views from those in the report."

She said (page 54) "she believed that this outcry, against such kind of dancing as she allowed at her house, was calculated to alienate the young, especially, from religious things."

"She also said (page 54) that those children, who were allowed to dance, were less likely to carry it to excess, and cared less about it than those who were not."

She said (page 55) "that in allowing the dance," complained of, "she had not departed, in the least, from her usual course."

Was she sincere in this?

"I had (page 54) no reason to distrust her sincerity."

Does any one doubt, after this, that the true and the sole issue in the case was that Dea. Tappan demanded, what the accused refused to render, *practical obedience* to the views of the report? There has been such studied misrepresentation on this point, that the reporter asks leave to refer the reader to the whole examination of Dea. T.; but more particularly to pages 48, 50, 51, 59, 62 and 63, which are irreconcilable with any other supposition.

See particularly his concluding testimony, (pages 62 and 63) where he says that when he asked for the satisfaction for which he came—to wit—that *she should say she was sorry for what she had done, and would not do so again*—"Mrs. W. said she could give FLEDGES to no one; that this winter's DANCING was nearly over, and that we might both be dead before another winter."

If any farther light on his intentions is wanted, see the third specification against D. C. Weston, by which it appears that he considered it a crime even to have

"protested," on its final passage, that the report was "NOT OBLIGATORY." Here it is.

"3d. That during the same discussion (on the report) HE PROTESTED AGAINST OUR PROCEEDINGS AS NOT OBLIGATORY," &c.

Also the *practical* disregard of the views of the church charged upon Mr. Weston and Mrs. Fuller, consisted in having played, for dancing, the one upon the violin and the other upon the piano.

See also Mr. Dole's remarks, pages 51, 52, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60.

See also Mrs. Fuller's note (pages 60 and 61) the allegations of which this gentleman denied.

See also (page 61) Mr. T.'s explanation of the remark of his, *proved* in the case, "that, if accepted, [the report] consistency would not require the church to follow up any infringement of it with church discipline."

See also, particularly, Mr. Tappan's own paper (page 89 and onward) written and read BEFORE IT WAS DETERMINED TO CHANGE THE ISSUE. And yet, in the face of these facts (and more might be mentioned) was it not a symptom of desperation in the pastor and others to represent *that there had been no attempt to make Mrs. Weston give up, in her house, the amusement of dancing?—that her having allowed dancing formed no part of her offence?—but that she was under discipline for showing a "BAD SPIRIT"?**

That these persons made these representations, hun-

* The fact that the moral force brought to bear upon them, obliged them to recede from and abandon their original intentions, while it excites pity at their duplicity, was in itself a victory of intelligence over bigotry; and an air of freedom was the consequence. Those who tremblingly expected to be taken in their turn, dismissed their fears; for by the course now pursued, the mouths of these gentlemen were hermetically sealed. It will be perceived that this was an abandonment of the whole ground. Dancing was either forbidden by the gospel, or it was not. If it was, (and this position was maintained, both by Mr. Dole, and Mr. Tappan,) then it was their duty to have disciplined all who allowed it. And if it was not, then they had no right to forbid it, and Mrs. W.'s having allowed it, was neither wrong in itself, nor could it, by possibility, be exhibitiv of any improper feeling. So that they merely writhed off from one horn of the dilemma to be impaled upon the other.

dreds will bear witness; and we have therefore been the more particular in exposing their fallacy.

How a minister of the gospel justified this to his conscience we know not. That is a part of the case with which we have nothing to do. Perhaps the success that attended his efforts compensated him for any reproaches of the silent monitor. Before leaving this subject we must be permitted to add—if ancient friendship, if a regard for the truth, if the desire to preserve unspotted his priestly robes, were insufficient to restrain him from such a course, one might have hoped that these attacks would not have been made upon a lady, by one who considers himself a gentleman.

The reporter, soon after the last meeting of the church, left town for several weeks, but the following account of what took place in his absence has been furnished from an undoubted source.

The reader will recollect the ominous remark of Mr. Dole (to be found at the close of the last chapter) "I don't know about that"—in reply to the suggestion of Mr. Hartwell, that the case of Mrs. Weston was finished. And true enough, it was an awkward position to attempt to exercise the high prerogative of church discipline, and suddenly to find the object of their fond solicitude, the person from whose eye they were endeavoring to extract the mote, (though perhaps for a scriptural reason, they were unable to see clearly how to operate,) upon whom they were bestowing all that kind and reclaiming care, pointed out both by scripture and approved writers as so salutary, so little grateful for their tender endeavors, as thus to fly from their friendly gripe. It could not be permitted.

A committee was therefore appointed, consisting of the Rev. B. Tappan, C. Dole and D. Williams, "to inquire respecting the right of a church member to withdraw at his own option, and the light in which a proceeding of this nature should be viewed in the case now before us." After due deliberation, this committee reported that a member had no right to withdraw without the consent of the church, and consequently that Judge

W. and his wife were still members; and Friday evening, June 26th, was assigned for its consideration.

Mr. HARTWELL suggested that before the report was accepted, Judge W. ought to have an opportunity to be heard—that as that document considered him still a member, courtesy seemed to require that he should be notified of the time, to which this subject was adjourned, so that he might attend if he saw fit.

C. DOLE coincided with Mr. H., and on his motion, Mr. H. was appointed a committee to call upon Judge W., for the purpose mentioned.

Mr. HARTWELL then inquired of the Pastor what would be his duties.

The PASTOR replied that he was to call upon Judge W. and notify him that the report was to be taken up on Friday evening, (June 26th) and that he could be present if he thought proper.

Accordingly on the following day, Mr. H. attended to the duty assigned him, but found, that Judge W. was to be absent on his official duties at the time specified, but that he would be in town on a certain other day, (Monday, the 22d instant,) and would attend, provided the consideration of the report was changed to that time.

Mr. D. Williams, on ascertaining this fact, made an agreement with the Pastor that the time should be so changed, and (as he, Mr. W., was to be out of town) notified Mr. Dole of the arrangement, requesting him to see that it was carried into effect, so that there might be no mistake about it.

The time, however, was not changed as agreed upon, although a church meeting was held at which Mr. Dole and the Pastor were both present, and at which Mr. Williams expected the proposed change would be made.

Mr. Hartwell and Mr. D. Williams (after the return of the latter) called upon Mr. Dole to inquire why the understanding was not carried into effect. Mr. D. at first said that it might have interfered with the arrangements for an association which was to meet THE NEXT DAY! But afterwards stated with some warmth—"I

have no idea of Judge W.'s being present at the discussion of the report—I am opposed to it. He claims not to be a member, and in my opinion, ought not to be present"—or language to that effect.

At the adjourned meeting, (June 26th) the Pastor having stated that the report on church membership was before the meeting,

WM. A. BROOKS, remarked that, as a committee had been appointed to notify Judge W. that he could be present, he thought it might be inferred that it was the sense of the church that Judge W. was at liberty to be present if he thought fit. But he had been informed that a certain member had declared that Judge W. *had no right to be present.*

H. GRIFFIN said that many things were laid to members that they did not say, and he thought such things ought to be ascertained before they were acted upon.

The PASTOR thereupon said that he did not know but that Mr. B. had reference to something which he had said, and then went on to explain.

W. A. BROOKS said that he did not refer to the Pastor.

DEA. MEANS thereupon said that he did not know but that it might have been something that *he* had said, and went on at some length to explain.

W. A. BROOKS said that he did not refer to Dea. Means.

C. DOLE thereupon asked if Mr. B. referred to him.

W. A. B. replied that he did.

C. DOLE then intimated that Mr. B. had not stated what he had said exactly as it was.

W. A. B. replied that his information came from two members who were present, and who, he had been informed, had called upon Mr. Dole, and to whom the language referred to was used. If he had not stated it correctly, they could set the matter right. If he had misunderstood it, he was glad of it, and he should be most happy if it could be satisfactorily explained.

D. WILLIAMS then stated the facts as we have stated them, supporting Mr. B. fully, and reiterating several times that he could not have misunderstood Mr. Dole.

J. H. HARTWELL stated his views, which were substantially as those stated by Mr. Williams.

C. DOLE [on whose motion Mr. Hartwell was appointed to notify Judge W. that he might be present, seeing the awkwardness of the circumstances] asked Mr. Hartwell how he accounted for the apparent discrepancy of his (Dole's) position.

J. H. HARTWELL. You can account for that better than I can. It is your business, not mine.

C. DOLE replied that the truth of the matter was THAT THE COURSE OF THINGS THROUGHOUT HAD BEEN UNSCRIPTURAL!

Whether Mr. T. ever explained his failure to carry out his agreement with Mr. Williams, we have not heard. Perhaps he had a good reason for what he did. At any rate we do not doubt that he could give as good an explanation of his conduct as Mr. D. did of his.

The upshot of the affair was, that the consideration of the report was postponed (a number of weeks) to Monday evening, July 27th.*

* Undoubtedly when Mr. Dole moved that Mr. Hartwell be a committee to notify Judge W. that he could be present, he knew that the latter would be out of town at the time specified, and therefore that he could *appear* to be extending a courtesy to him, while he was very sure that it would not result in Judge W.'s presence. But when he found that there was an actual, *bona fide* intention to change the meeting so that this gentleman *could* be present, he showed his true colors. This is about a fair specimen of the sniffing, whiffing course pursued throughout this "unscriptural" business. This is, to be sure, a collateral affair—"a parallel course of reading," as they say at our seminaries—but as Mr. T. and Mr. Dole were the two prominent individuals who conducted matters, and "relieved each other at the wheel," we feel justified in letting the truth be known. People who will make war upon men, women, and children, ought not to expect us to "advance backwards" and throw the mantle of charity over their misdeeds. Did these gentlemen suppose they were manifesting a "*good spirit*?" If so, it throws some light on their meaning when they accused Mrs. Weston of showing a "*bad spirit*."

CHAPTER XI.

"Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite." Job xvii, 8.

"That they may shoot in **SECRET** at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter: **THEY COMMUNE OF LAYING SNARES PRIVILY; THEY SAY, WHO SHALL SEE THEM?**" Ps. lxiv, 4, 5.

"For a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." Ec. x, 20.

It has been our painful duty to record many instances of duplicity on the part of the church leaders, which are the more to be regretted, because not usually expected in societies of this nature; but that which may be considered the crowning act, will be disclosed in this chapter.

We have frequently alluded to an apparent combination of the majority that could not be accounted for except on the supposition that there existed amongst them a secret understanding. What was strongly suspected, (though for three months no positive proof could be obtained, so profound was the silence on the subject,) was at length brought to light.

On the return of the reporter from an absence of seven or eight weeks, the following facts were revealed to him under a promise of secrecy as to who was his informant—namely—

That these proceedings had all been concocted, and agreed upon at a caucus, consisting of most of those who voted for, or were in favor of, Mr. Dole's report against dancing;—

That such members as Church Williams, William A. Brooks, John H. Hartwell, and others who were known, or supposed, to be against compelling by church discipline, practical conformity to the views of that report, were not only not invited to this caucus, but that its very existence was carefully concealed from them;—

That the Rev. Benjamin Tappan and Mr. Carleton Dole were active and efficient members on that occasion, the former being the presiding officer;—

That Dea. Tappan was regularly chosen and appointed their agent to commence the prosecutions (Dr. Snell, who was previously agreed upon, having declined to act in that capacity);—

So that in all Dea. T. had done, he was merely acting in obedience to instructions, given by his principals, who were of course pledged to stand by him. And lastly that there were present at this meeting from fifteen to twenty persons, which constituted a decided majority in the vestry, twenty five being about the average number usually attending in that place. Incredible as this may seem, the reader will find that it was fully proved.

CHAPTER XII.

“As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?” Exodus ix, 17.

“But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you; yea, who knoweth not such things as these?” Job xii, 3.

Vestry, Monday evening, July 27th.

The pastor stated that the subject assigned for this evening was the report of the committee appointed to inquire into what constituted church membership, and how that membership could be dissolved. He said that the meeting had been postponed to this time at Judge W.’s request, who wished to be present.

J. H. HARTWELL called for the reading of the report, and the following document was accordingly read by the chair.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

"The Committee appointed on the evening of the 3d inst., to inquire respecting the right of a church member to withdraw at his own option, and the light in which a proceeding of this nature should be viewed in the case now before us, have attended to the service assigned them, and ask leave to

REPORT.

A christian church is an association of professed believers in Christ, formed by the free consent and mutual agreement of its members. Men are not born into the church, nor do they become members by any act of power, civil or ecclesiastical, but by the concurrent action, voluntary and deliberate, of the person joining, and of the church that receives him. It is a duty, however, that God has required of us, after first giving our hearts to Him, and embracing as our rule of faith and practice, the gospel of His son, publicly to confess Christ, and associate ourselves with some branch of His visible church. And when these steps are taken, we are bound by the strongest moral obligations to obey the rules which Christ has prescribed for his followers, and to fulfil the engagements of that covenant into which we have voluntarily entered.

That covenant is made first with God. He who joins a christian church enters into solemn covenant with his Maker—pledging himself to love and serve Him as long as he exists. [Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken to His voice.] From the bonds of this covenant he can never be released. He hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, and he cannot go back. He is not absolutely bound, by his covenant with God, to retain his connection through life with a particular church. But he is bound by ties which cannot be broken, to observe somewhere in connection with some church, (unless circumstances not under his control should render it impracticable) the ordinances of the Gospel. An attempt to withdraw from the church of Christ altogether, would be an attempt to absolve himself from his allegiance to Christ, to break in sunder the bonds of his covenant with Him—and to cast himself out of His kingdom, into the world that lieth in wickedness.

The covenant of a church may be considered secondly, as a contract between the church and the individual member, mutually securing certain benefits, and pledging the reciprocal performance of certain duties. It is a contract of the most solemn

nature—being made for religious ends, required as a religious duty, and avowedly entered into in the presence of God. This contract being made between two parties cannot be dissolved but by mutual consent. This principle is very explicitly laid down in the Cambridge Platform, in Prof. Upham's *Ratio Disciplinæ*, and in Mitchell's *Guide to the principles and practices of the Congregational churches of New England*. The statement of Mr. Mitchell is as follows: "A member is not at liberty to withdraw himself from the church to which he belongs without its consent, whether to join some other church or to return again to the world." It is not known that a different opinion has been advanced by any respectable author. Dr. Wayland indeed has said, that "no man continues in the church of Christ any longer than he will." But he also recognizes on the same page, the duty of the church, to enforce upon its members the laws of the association—the laws, as he afterwards says, which Christ has made for them. If then an individual should attempt to leave the church in any way not consistent with those laws, the church cannot admit the validity of the proceeding, but must regard it as null and void. "Persons may from the mere love of change, an imperfect sense of moral obligation, or from inordinate and unfounded jealousies, seek a removal from the church of which they are members. But as a departure, on such grounds, would be highly sinful, and injurious, it is requisite," says the author of *Ratio Disciplinæ*, "in all cases of intended secession, to advise with the church, and a removal without such consultation, would be considered unauthorized. The practice of consulting the church on these occasions results not only from the fact of its connection with the well being of all the parties concerned, and of the church at large, but from the reasonable principle, that those who are joined with consent, should not, IN ORDINARY CASES, depart without consent. The member, therefore, who wishes to transfer his relationship, should lay the subject before the brethren with whom he is in covenant, for their consideration, that they may act upon it according to the best of their judgment. If a member's departure be manifestly unsafe and sinful," says the Cambridge Platform, "the church may not consent thereunto; for in so doing they would not act in faith, and would partake with him in his sin. If the case be doubtful, and the person not to be persuaded, it seemeth best to leave the matter unto God, and not forcibly to detain him."

Doubtless there are cases, in which it is the right and duty of a member to seek a dismission from one christian church to

another; and of the church to which he belongs to grant a dismission. Should it be refused, the proper remedy consists in submitting the question to a mutual council, or if the request for a mutual council be denied, to an *ex parte* council.

The impropriety of an attempt to withdraw from a christian church without its consent, is in the judgment of your committee, peculiarly apparent, when a course of discipline has been commenced, and the case is still pending. Were it admitted, that church members so situated are at liberty to withdraw at their own pleasure, all efforts to maintain gospel discipline would be nugatory, and the will of Christ in relation to that subject, would be entirely frustrated.

Influenced by these considerations, your committee are unanimously of opinion, that this church cannot with propriety admit that the connection, of Judge Weston and his wife, with them, has been dissolved—but must still regard them as members, bound by solemn “promise” to walk with this church in the ordinances of God, and over whom the church are bound by their covenant engagements, “to watch for their good unto edification.”

In behalf of the Committee,

B. TAPPAN.

Augusta, June 17, 1840.”

J. J. KILBURN. I move that the report be accepted.

JUDGE WESTON'S REMARKS.

JUDGE W. then rose and said,

Mr. Moderator:—The suggestion, that a decision of the church on the report of their committee on our withdrawal was postponed at my request, is a mistake; for although a copy of that report had been furnished to me, I have been given to understand, that I was not to be permitted to be present at its discussion. I appear for the purpose of learning what testimony parson Tappan has to give against Mrs. Weston. The evidence in her case had closed on both sides: but certain insinuations have been made as to further facts, which I am anxious should be fully probed; being assured that nothing to her disadvantage, upon a fair examination, can be made to appear. I do not claim to be a member of this society, having withdrawn from your communion—

but protesting against your jurisdiction—and reserving all my rights under that instrument which announced to you my withdrawal, I intend to make a few suggestions. The church it is said have, at their late meetings, been engaged in prayer, with special reference to recent proceedings. It is a course much to be commended. But what is the response of Heaven? To the law and to the testimony—ye have Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles. See to it, that ye take nothing therefrom, that God take not away your part out of the book of life; and that ye add nothing thereto, lest He visit upon you the plagues, denounced in His word. That word, in its simplicity, is the only lamp to our feet. It is equally necessary to secure us against fanaticism and bigotry on the one hand, and infidelity, in all its varied forms, on the other. So far as you add to the law of Christ, you not only usurp power, but you set up your judgment as of equal authority.

From first to last my wife, whom you have arraigned before you, has protested against your proceedings. We have called upon you to justify your course, by the plain requirements of holy writ. An able writer on church discipline, whose essays may be found in the New York Observer, affirms, that the accused has a right to claim this in all cases; and that no ecclesiastical prosecution is tenable, which cannot be thus sustained. You do not respond to the call; but you insist that it may be done by inference. Whose inference? Yours, not ours. By what authority do you require us to abide by your inferences. Are we blindly to receive your interpretation of scripture, whether it commends itself to our reason and judgment or not? All the errors, and even persecutions, which have afflicted the christian church, have been attempted to be justified by inference, and by the false logic, which has so often deformed theological discussion.

The claim of infallibility, in interpreting the word of God for others, has been set up before in high places. The world has had large experience of its fruits. It

can never again be submitted to, with the assent of the enlightened part of mankind. The Bible, in its simplicity, is the only light, by which we can safely walk. If we are governed by what is there plainly commanded or plainly forbidden, we shall have a well founded hope of final acceptance with God. But if we give ourselves up to the glosses and inferences of fallible man, influenced as he is by so many corrupt and selfish passions, there may be reason to fear, that another dark reign of priesthood may again overshadow the earth for a thousand years.

On a former occasion, I exhausted all the power of moral suasion, which I was able to command, to arrest your course. But I pleaded in vain. I perceived that I encountered an *esprit de corps*, by what means created, or by what discipline sustained, I did not then know. Within a few days, the matter has been explained. The prosecutions now before you, sir, were concocted and set on foot by yourself, and certain other members of the church, convened in an ecclesiastical caucus. And this extraordinary measure has been kept, for many months, a profound secret. The prosecutor is your agent, specially selected for this purpose: and he, instead of avowing his constituency, declared again and again, that he was self moved acting upon his own authority and responsibility.* He pretends to the accused, that he comes on a friendly visit, while he is treasuring up every unguarded expression, which in pursuance of his mission, is to be recounted before you.

And the members of that caucus are gravely sitting as judges, to decide between Deacon Tappan and Mrs. Weston. Is not this a mockery of justice? Let me tell you, sir, if this is your morality, your standard of morals is far below that of this "wicked world," about which, you are in the habit of talking so much. I sol-

* See page 108. Dea. T. had also stated the same thing to numerous persons not members of the church. This was to protect the reputation of his brother, who, it was asserted, must have been concerned in the bringing of the complaints. Mr. Tappan himself, when applied to, would not admit that he was concerned in that affair, but evaded the question.

emly protest against the right of any member, who acted at that secret meeting, to vote in relation to prosecutions which he caused to be instituted. I entertain not the slightest doubt, that but for that meeting, the church would have dismissed the charges against Mrs. Weston, upon the reading of her answer. One member, from the honest impulses of his nature, remarked that he did not know what more she could have said; and yet he was not prepared to declare, that the charge had not been sustained. Gentlemen were virtually pledged to stand by their agent. But if the expedient of a caucus had failed, I understand you have endeavored to brace up the church to the disagreeable work, from the pulpit. Decorum forbids us to answer you there. I should be quite happy to have an opportunity to do so, on some suitable occasion.*

In your report, you still claim the right to watch over us for our "edification." I am constrained to say, that that the time is passed, when we can receive "edification" from you. That privilege must be reserved for those, who can enjoy it. I was a member of your society, in the days of your predecessor. I am not a changeable man. Although you were never a favorite of mine, I have adhered to you for nearly thirty years. I should never have left you, if you had not assailed my family, and violated the sanctity of my dwelling, to make inquisition into what passed around my domestic hearth, which you have followed up in the caucus, the vestry, and the pulpit, with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. And we are now to be denied, it seems, the poor privilege of withdrawing from you.

One word further, in regard to our withdrawal. The reasons upon which it is based, we have expressed clearly in the paper prepared by us, and now in your

* Mr. T. since the filing of the complaints, had preached sermons which were considered to have express reference thereto—bracing up the nerves of the majority to go on in their career,—telling them that the church was "to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." He omitted to add that "THE SONS OF LEVI" were to be purged "as gold and silver." See Malachi, iii, 3.

possession. Not one of these reasons is answered, or even noticed in your report. I do not pretend, that it is a measure in accordance with ordinary usage. But I insist, that the first fault is yours. You have broken your covenant by an usurpation of power. You pay no heed to our protestations. We declare, with the most perfect sincerity, that your legislation is without authority, and that under pretence of it, you are oppressing an ancient and unoffending member, unconscious of wrong. The ear of a drilled majority is steeled against our most moving appeals. We have a right to assume, that the breach of our mutual covenant on your part, discharges us from its obligation; and that a withdrawal, under the circumstances, in which we were placed, is a measure purely defensive.

What can we do? Are we bound to submit, in a matter, which we say is clearly beyond your jurisdiction? Is your judgment the standard of right and wrong, or may we dare to regard that as innocent, which God has not forbidden? Is our moral discrimination to go for nothing? Have the minority no rights? Are you to be the definitive and final judges of your own powers? Are all our movements to be under your dictation? Is your authority, at your pleasure, to govern us at all times and places; when we lie down, and when we rise up, at home and abroad, in the city and in the field? I am a man as well as you. I am endowed with reason and conscience. The word of God is in my hands. I have as ardent a desire and as deep an interest, as any of you, to understand His will. I claim, and will exercise, the right of private judgment. So deeply impressed am I with the value of this privilege, that I am ready in defence of it, if need be, to go to the stake.

Ecclesiastical power has its terrors. Its dispensers have sometimes claimed to bind and loose for both worlds. But, thank God, the fan is in His hands, who tries the reins and the heart. The same Great Refiner holds the moral crucible. It is His prerogative, not yours, to separate the tares from the wheat, the wheat

from the chaff, and the dross from the pure gold. In a matter of conscience then, I fear not what man can do. What we regard to be innocent or indifferent, you pronounce to be sinful. Upon this assumption, you proceed against the wife of my bosom, the mother of my children. We call for your authority. You produce it not. We deny your power. You rebuke us, and persist in your course. As an extraordinary remedy, in a case of oppression unprecedented, we withdraw from your fellowship. It is not the church of God we leave. You constitute but a small part of that glorious company. We hope to find some other communion, who will not undertake to lord it over our consciences, and to put us under tutors and guardians, at our time of life.

Upon one point, you speak with great assurance in your report; that a withdrawal is in the highest degree improper, while a case of discipline is pending. You still call it, *ex-cathedra*, a case of discipline. I deny, that you have rightfully any such case against Mrs. Weston; and upon your affirmation and my denial, we have both to answer before the judgment seat of Christ. A woman, descended from pious ancestors, brought up from her infancy in the fear of God, who thirty years ago made a profession of religion, and who has lived as became her profession, is charged with a matter, which does not wound her conscience; and which she declares before God and man, she believes to be innocent. It is impossible, that this should be a case of discipline. After all her moral and religious cultivation, if her conscience is void of offence, who shall condemn her? Will you take the fearful responsibility? Will you dare to accuse her before the throne of God, because she refuses to disregard the dictates of her own conscience, and make yours her moral standard? Unless you are prepared to go this length, you have no case of discipline. That you have assumed this power, and that you have resorted to extraordinary measures to maintain it, is the very matter of which we complain. If our just rights can be otherwise preserved, we will cheerfully

take back our withdrawal. But we insist, that you first retrace your steps, and do justice to Mrs. Weston, whom you have injured and oppressed.

I go further. I am willing to leave the whole matter to some learned, respectable, and disinterested divine, out of the reach of any undue influence from either of us. With a view to such a result, I submit the following

PROPOSITION.

Whereas a difference of opinion has arisen between the church of the South Parish in Augusta, and Nathan Weston, and Paulina, his wife, in relation to their respective rights, powers and duties; *and whereas* it is desirable to take the opinion of some disinterested and learned divine, upon the points of difference; it is accordingly agreed, that the following documents shall be submitted, without note or comment, to President Wayland, of Brown University.

First. The church covenant of the said church.*

Secondly. The printed resolutions and report of said church, on the subject of dancing.

Thirdly. The written charges, preferred by Deacon Enoch S. Tappan against Mrs. Weston, and her two children, Daniel C. Weston and Catharine M. Fuller, and the vote of the church thereupon, suspending them from the communion.

Fourthly. The written answer of Mrs. Weston to said charges; with the further fact, that her answer was proved to be in conformity with the truth.

Fifthly. The document, handed in by Judge and Mrs. Weston, withdrawing from said church; and

Sixthly. The written report of a committee of the church, upon that measure.

It is further agreed, that the following questions shall be submitted to the decision of President Wayland.

First. Are the resolutions and report, before referred to, and the prosecutions which followed, based upon

* For the Covenant, see Appendix, B.

them, within the lawful power of the church, or do they transcend the commands of Christ, and constitute an usurpation of power on their part.

Secondly. Was the course, taken by Judge and Mrs. Weston, in withdrawing from the church, a lawful measure.

And it is further agreed, that if he shall decide the second question in the affirmative, and that the proceeding of the church was unwarrantable, the relation between Judge and Mrs. Weston and the church shall be considered at an end.

But if he shall decide the second question negatively; and shall also decide, that there has been an usurpation of power on the part of the church, Judge and Mrs. Weston shall withdraw their document, claiming to dissolve their connection, and their relation shall still continue, it being further understood and agreed, that the prosecutions of Deacon Tappan shall be withdrawn, and that the usurped power of the church shall be considered as abrogated, and the church further agreeing to give them a dismission, if they desire it.

And if he shall decide, that the proceedings on the part of the church have been warrantable, and on the part of Judge and Mrs. Weston unwarrantable, it is agreed that they will withdraw the document last referred to, that their connection with the church shall continue; and that they will submit themselves to its discipline, upon all points within the church covenant.

Of this proposition of Judge W., made in writing, not the slightest notice was taken.

Adjourned to Wednesday evening.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The words of his mouth were *smoother than butter*, but **WAR** was in his heart : his words were *softer than oil*, yet were they drawn swords." Ps. lv, 21.

"How like a hateful ape
Detected, grinning midst his pilfer'd boards,
A cunning man appears, whose secret fraud
Is opened to the day ! Scorned, hooted, mock'd !" *Basil.*

"**ENVY.** My Lord, I could say much more, only I would not be tedious to the court. Yet if need be, when the other gentlemen have given in their evidence, rather than anything shall be wanting that will dispatch him, I WILL ENLARGE MY TESTIMONY AGAINST HIM." *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Wednesday evening, July 29th.

PASTOR. The question is on the acceptance of the report of the committee on church membership.

J. HEDGE seconded Mr. Kilburn's motion, made at the last meeting, to accept the report.

The motion was put, and the report accepted. The case of Mrs. W. was then resumed.*

C. DOLE said that but few questions, in the course of this case, had been put to Deacon T., excepting those put by Judge and Daniel Weston. He said he had put but one: and Dr. Snell had put another with regard to the *neutralization*.

He then spoke of what had been denominated an "ecclesiastical caucus." He was present at it, and would tell about it. First, however, he would state admitted facts. The Report on dancing had been accepted in March. The meeting at Mrs. Weston's was on the 8th of April. The world was commenting on it. It wore the aspect of opposition to the church. The publicity of the affair made it, if an offence, a *public* one. It was thus viewed; and a *social interview* was called to talk the subject over. The question proposed

* Judge and Mrs. Weston never considered themselves members after their withdrawal; and the latter never afterwards entered the vestry.

at that interview, was, what does courtesy require in the case? Though not obliged to do so, it was thought expedient to adopt the course, pointed out in Matt. 18; and the hope was, that one visit would settle the whole difficulty. The wish was to have everything done with the least laceration of feeling—with kindness and courtesy. No improper feeling was exhibited at the meeting. The wish was to select the most suitable person to visit the family.

JUDGE W. Will you allow me to ask if Dr. Snell was selected by lot, for the task?

C. DOLE. He was not. He was proposed, but declined. My object was to do things without wounding. [Here he read from "Mitchel's Guide," to show that in cases of *public offence*,* the brethren were not obliged to follow Matt. 18, but might have such a meeting as this.]

When members heard stories about each other, it was

* This attempt to avoid the opprobrium of that caucus, by calling the dancing of children at Mrs. W.'s a "*public offence*," puts one in mind of the desperation of a drowning man, who, it is said, will sometimes seize hold of a *stone*, to save himself. An extract from page 138 of "*RATIO DISCIPLINÆ*," (the great congregational work upon this subject) will exhibit this attempt in its true light. "But if the offence be more **PUBLIC** at first, and of a more *heinous and criminal nature*, to wit, **SUCH AS ARE CONDEMNED BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE**, then the church, without such gradual proceedings, [those enjoined in Matt. 18] is to cast out the offender from their holy communion," &c. And moreover, (page 139, same work) "**THE PASTOR IS THE AGENT IN BRINGING PUBLIC AND KNOWN SCANDALS BEFORE THE CHURCH.**" See also, as a curiosity, page 58, where this same Mr. Dole says, that acting contrary to the opinions of the church, is "**A PERSONAL MATTER BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND INDIVIDUAL,**" &c. But now, when the caucus is discovered, the character of the offence has changed wonderfully. But suppose this was a "*public offence*," and that they were not obliged to follow Matt. 18, why pretend to have followed it? And again, in cases of "*public offence*" the church are to proceed, not a caucus of a *part* of the church. On the whole, this was the most miserable subterfuge possible. It shows how dangerous it is to take the first false step.

their duty to call upon each other and state them, if they had doubts in their minds. He once went two miles and a half through the snow, to see a member in Alna, to ascertain the truth of what he had heard; and the person thanked him for it.

He then made some general remarks upon the object and scope of a church; and the reciprocal duties of churches and members. Churches acknowledged no laws but Christ's. They could not *pass* laws, but interpret them.

JUDGE W. Do you claim to interpret the Bible for me?

C. DOLE. No, sir. Mr. D. then went on to state that the discipline to be used was that enjoined by Christ and His apostles. It was, in its nature, corrective and moral. It should not be conducted like Courts of Law. There should be no yielding to the fear of man—no acting on the offensive and defensive: but everything should be conducted with forbearance and forgiveness, and the object gained would be mutual confidence.

As to the present difficulty. He did not understand that the church had undertaken to dictate to families their amusements. There might be an honest difference of opinion: but there might also be too little regard for the feelings of the church, in the exercise of individual rights. In this case it was the *spirit* complained of, and not the *act*.*

*The church had not "undertaken to dictate to families their amusements"! See what Dea. T. says (page 50). "I considered those expressions *neutralized* by her saying that she would be ground to powder before she would be *dictated* to by the church."

It will be perceived that Mr. D. is attempting, in the face of all the facts in the case, to support the story, put in circulation principally by himself and the Rev. B. Tappan, that no attempt had been made to compel Mrs. W. to conform to the report. Several months had elapsed since the withdrawal of Judge W. and his wife, and the sayings and doings and documents which transpired at that time, it was supposed, had partially faded from the memory.

He then made some further general statements as to the rights and duties of a church; and gave it as his opinion that the church might discipline for any improper *spirit* manifested by its members.

JUDGE W. stated that he was desirous to put certain questions to Dea. Means. [No objection being made, he proceeded.]

Was there not a meeting of certain members of the church at your house, Dea. M., somewhere near Fast-day, to take into consideration "what should be done with Judge Weston's family"?

DEA. MEANS (in great trepidation.) I should like to know from the Chair what is before the meeting.

PASTOR. There is no motion. As that meeting has been spoken of, this evening, I should think Judge W.'s question was proper.

DEA. M. I can't tell the exact time of the meeting. There was such a meeting, as Mr. Dole said.

JUDGE W. Who were present?

DEA. M. I should think about twenty.*

If you will allow me to tell about it in my own way, perhaps it would be more satisfactory.

"In this case, it was the *spirit* complained of, and not the *act*!"! Then Mrs. W. had *done* nothing wrong. How then could they infer that she had a bad "*spirit*." "Ye shall know them by their fruits." By abandoning the ground first taken, the case presented the strange anomaly of mortal men sitting in judgment upon the "*SPIRIT*," with no wrongful *act* to guide their deliberations. God is the "searcher of *hearts*," and His prerogative in this particular, was never, that we know of, delegated to the South Parish Church, in Augusta.

Why did not Mr. D., instead of making "confusion worse confounded," by resorting to such subterfuges, come out like a man, acknowledge his error, and apologize to Mrs. W. for his ungentlemanly treatment? One thing more. When a person has *done* nothing wrong, how can his "*spirit*" the *intention* of his heart, be a "*public offence*"? We believe that even Mr. Dole, when he comes to put these two things together, will have the grace to blush.

* There were usually present at the vestry church meetings about twenty five male members. So that the combination formed at Dea. Means' was sufficiently numerous to bear down all opposition.

JUDGE W. I have but few questions to ask, Dea. Means. I trust you will oblige me by answering them. Was the notice for this meeting public, or private?

DEA. M. It was private.

JUDGE W. Were *all* the brethren invited, or only a *part* of them?

DEA. M. Only a part.

JUDGE W. Were all, now in this house, present on that occasion?

DEA. M. There are some here who were not present.

JUDGE W. Was the Pastor there?

DEA. M. He was.

JUDGE W. Was Dr. Snell present?

DEA. M. He was.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Child present?

J. L. CHILD. No. Mr. Child was not there.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Hooper there?

DEA. M. Yes.

JUDGE W. Was Church Williams there?

DEA. M. No.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Griffin there?

DEA. M. Yes.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Hartwell there?

DEA. M. No.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Kilburn there?

DEA. M. Yes.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Brooks there?

DEA. M. No.

JUDGE W. Was Dea. Tappan there?

DEA. M. Yes.

JUDGE W. It would be useless to inquire if I was there. I suppose my son was not invited?

DEA. M. No, sir.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Craig there?

DEA. M. He was.*

* Dea. M. was mistaken with regard to Mr. Craig; for, although acting with these gentlemen and being in their secrets, for some reason he was not present at the caucus.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Davis there?

DEA. M. He was.

JUDGE W. Was Mark Nason there?

DEA. M. He was.

JUDGE W. Was Judge Redington there?

DEA. M. No.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Hedge present?

DEA. M. Yes.

JUDGE W. Was Mr. Little there?

DEA. M. He was.*

JUDGE W. Was the meeting called to take into consideration, "what should be done with Judge Weston's family?"

DEA. M. It was.

JUDGE W. Was Dr. Snell deputed to converse with them?

DEA. M. He was selected for that purpose.

JUDGE W. Was it by lot?

DEA. M. No. He was selected as a suitable man. The conversation was free; and there was but one desire, which was to have things reconciled. The invitation which had been given by Mrs. W., and the dancing at her house, was the topic of conversation. It was though best to follow Matt. 18. Dr. Snell declined to go; and Dr. T. was then appointed.†

* Judge W. might have exposed more names, but having got out all he wished, he did not think it worth while to pursue the subject.

† Thus was this *secret* meeting dragged to light. It was the key to the whole proceedings, and accounted for the evident determination to stand by Dea. T. at all events, right or wrong.

The exposure of this caucus met with a burst of indignation from all quarters and sects. Indeed personal character was involved. Dea. T. had declared, repeatedly, that he was *self moved*, in all that he did—that *he was entirely uninfluenced—that it was his act—and that his was the responsibility.*

In the complaint (page 40) he pretends that he has followed Matt. 18, and says that he "*does not tell this to the church,*" without having first attempted to obtain satisfaction "*in private interviews.*" Was there ever such a piece of mockery? Three fourths of the members present when the

C. DOLE. I was named first, but declined on account of my having been the writer of the Report, as my motives might have been misconstrued.

JUDGE W. Do you recollect, Mr. Means, that Dea. T. stated in this vestry that he gave Mrs. Weston to understand that he was *self moved in this business, and acting of his own accord, and entirely uninfluenced by others?*

DEA. M. I don't recollect that he did.

complaints were filed, were the very men under whose orders Dea. T. was acting. And yet this Deacon brings forward his complaint for a private grievance, deeming it his duty, all other means of redress having failed, *"to bring the matter before the church."* Poor man! Having kept his cause of grief locked within his own breast, till, like the fox beneath the coat of the Spartan, it nearly tore his heart out, he felt obliged to *"TELL THIS TO THE CHURCH"!!* How much better it would have been for Mrs. W. to have told Dea. T. *that she was sorry for what she had done and that she would not do so again!* And then no one except Dea. T. would have known that Dea. T. was grieved!! But no. She would not say what was categorically required, and so Dea. T. was obliged to expose her to the Pastor and the rest. And this last named gentleman, who presided at the secret caucus, unfolds the complaint in apparent surprise, to see what it can be, and it is read to those assembled who are made acquainted with its nature, *apparently*, for the first time.

The whole was admirably managed, and kept secret wonderfully well.

See page 57, where Mr. Dole, in answer to a question from D. C. Weston, said *"I did not bring this complaint"*—as if he had nothing to do with it.

See also page 98, where he says, in speaking generally of cases of discipline, that *"UP TO THIS POINT [the presentment of the complaint] THE CHURCH ARE IGNORANT OF THE AFFAIR."*

See also page 58, where Dea. Means was very fearful this might be an *"EX-PARTE PROCEEDING,"* unless some persons were appointed to *"conduct the trial on the part of the church."*

See also page 107, where this same Dea. Means wanted to ask questions *as to the spirit with which Dea. T. called upon Mrs. W.*

Would not such duplicity cover with disgrace the most corrupt political party? And is it any less reprehensible in a body that purports to be a church of Christ, and that is so very strict as to morals that it will not allow children to dance?

PASTOR. Did you not mean, brother, by that statement, that you were not influenced *contrary to your own judgment?*

DEA. T. That was what I meant.

C. DOLE here stated that the meeting at Mr. Means' was conducted in the *mildest* manner, and with the *best* feelings.

JUDGE W. No doubt everything was conducted in the *mildest* manner of which it is possible to conceive. You are remarkable for the *mildness* and *softness* of your manner.

There was certain testimony, said he, to come out at this meeting. There has been a good deal said about what "*could be proved.*" Certain gentlemen being unable, from anything which has yet appeared, to fasten the slightest blame upon Mrs. W., and being anxious to sustain the church at her expense, have *insinuated* that if "*people only knew everything—if they were at liberty to tell all,* there would be a change of public opinion with regard to the case." Now I wish to put a stop to this at once. Let there be no more *insinuations*. If there is any one here who knows anything against Mrs. Weston, let him state it.

[Here there was a pause.]

JUDGE W. continued. I understood from Mr. Dole that Parson Tappan could throw some light on her conduct.

C. DOLE. I was misunderstood.

JUDGE W. Perhaps so. At any rate there has been a great deal said, out of the vestry, about some very important testimony which was expected from Parson Tappan.

PASTOR. It is a very remarkable rumor. I have said that there was a very little of my conversation with Mrs. W., that I could recollect. And moreover, it was a private conversation which I don't feel myself at liberty to repeat.* I heard of the invitation given for the dance

* And yet he can read papers given almost under the seal of the confessional.

at her house, and called to see her before the party, for the purpose of conversing upon the subject. I staid there two hours. We got to discussing the *report*. Mrs. W. made some remarks, to which I replied. At six o'clock, preparations were made for tea, and I went away without stating the object of my visit. In so doing I failed of my duty; and if Mrs. W. was here I should tell her so.

JUDGE W. Have you seen her since?

PASTOR. No, sir. I called, but found another lady at the house in whose presence, I did not see fit to introduce the subject. I called again and saw her daughter, and conversed with her, and thought it would do as well. This delay accounts for the apparent haste of my brother, who was not to go till after myself.

JUDGE W. Then you were to go first, and the *deputy* was to follow.

When you saw Mrs. W., did she ask what was to be done with those who did not believe and practice upon the principles of the report?

PASTOR. She or her daughter did.

JUDGE W. Did Mrs. W. ask you if your father had sent you to a dancing school?

PASTOR. She did.

JUDGE W. Did you answer her inquiry?

PASTOR. Not directly.

JUDGE W. Taking your silence for an affirmative answer, did she not ask you how it happened that you were so much wiser than your father was?

PASTOR. She did; and I told her that times had changed.

JUDGE W. *I am aware that times have changed.*

PASTOR. With regard to her inquiry as to what we should do with those who differed. The remark was made "you will be obliged to turn out those who allow dancing"? I replied that that did not follow; that it would be discretionary with the church whether they would discipline or not,—that they would be no more obliged to take it up than to take up every case of *evil speaking*.

D. C. WESTON. Do you put dancing on a par with evil speaking?

PASTOR. I should inquire into the circumstances.

J. HOOPER. Where is Mrs. Weston? I do not see her here, and suppose it to be out of order to proceed without her.

JUDGE W. You won't see her here very soon, I apprehend.—I ask again—Is there anything against Mrs. W., which has not been stated? If so let it come out, and let there be an end of all insinuations of what "*might be proved.*" I earnestly entreat that if there is any one present who knows anything against her, he would state it.

C. DOLE. I should like to ask Dr. Tappan a few questions.

D. C. W. Why did you not put your questions at the proper time?

C. DOLE. Because the method which we were then pursuing was unscriptural.* I so stated on two or three evenings, and made remarks as to the mode which should be pursued. I asked Mrs. W.'s permission to put questions. My health was better then than now, and I felt greater yearnings of spirit: but my request was declined. No question was answered from first to last.

Suppose you, Judge W., do something which occasions me grief. I go to you and state my grievance. You throw yourself on your reserved rights, as the southerners say, and refuse to speak: or you take the ground that you haven't hurt my feelings.

(He then asked.) On reflection, Dr. T., was it the *act* at Mrs. W.'s house, or the *spirit* of which you complained?

DEA. T. It was the disregard of the views and feelings of the church, as expressed in the complaint. It was wholly the *feeling* which she manifested.

C. DOLE. Had the invitation not been given to dance, and had the society met, and had they amused them-

* Was it any more "unscriptural" now ?

selves as usual, should you have considered it a similar case to the present?*

DEA. T. I should have considered it entirely different. *Nothing was farther from my heart than to interfere with the amusements in Judge W.'s family.*†

JUDGE W. Why did you attend the caucus at Dea. Means'?

DEA. T. I don't know. I regret that I did not walk right over to Mrs. W.'s as soon as I heard of the invitation.

JUDGE W. I don't think you are particularly censurable for *delay*.

DEA. T. I am not conscious of undue haste. I did not see Mrs. W. the first or second time I called.

D. WILLIAMS. Should you have called upon Mrs. W., had it not been for the meeting at Mr. Means'?

DEA. T. I don't know as I should. I think I might have gone, or got some one else to have gone.

JUDGE W. You told Mrs. W. with some indignation, that you were not influenced by any one in the slightest degree—that *you acted entirely of your own accord*. She afterwards noticed your using the expression—"I told them I could talk with Mrs. Weston"—which slipped from you, and the meaning of it never occurred to her until after the discovery of the caucus.

DEA. T. I don't recollect that form of expression. I have not detailed all the conversation. I was interrupted in a way that displeased me, I am free to acknowledge. I don't know as I can recollect accurately anything farther relevant to the case.

* This harping upon the "party," and the invitation "to dance," is astonishing when it is considered that the real facts in the case were well known. See remarks, and references, pages 67 and 68. Facts can control the belief, but not always the tongue.

† Was this man sane? He was not going to interfere with the amusements in Judge W.'s family; and yet Mrs. W. was not to be allowed to *invite* children to dance!!! How this man DARKED to say this, after he had complained of Mr. Weston and Mrs. Fuller, for playing on the violin and piano for children to dance, in Judge Weston's house, and when the third specification against Mr. Weston was that he *protested that the report on dancing was not obligatory*, is difficult to explain on any known system of morals.

C. DOLE thought the church could judge of the "relevancy" of the testimony.

DEA. T. She said this was all got up by new-comers and meddlers.*

C. DOLE. I perceive by Mrs. W.'s answer, and the withdrawal, that she and her husband think differently as to the cause of the difficulty. *They speak of the act: you speak of the quo animo.* Did you present to her the *essence* of the difficulty?†

DEA. T. I endeavored to present the conduct and spirit as in opposition to the views of the church.

C. DOLE. When was the "neutralization"—at the beginning or latter part of your interview?

DEA. T. One of the last things she said was that she would not be dictated to; and that I was grieved without cause.

D. WILLIAMS. Did you controvert the conduct?

DEA. T. I can't separate the conduct from the spirit. I represented, as clearly as I could, that it was the *spirit* of which I complained. She said she would be ground to powder before she would be dictated to.

* This was, we believe, the *third* time he had repeated that expression; and it was the fourth time he had been called upon to testify, notwithstanding he had repeatedly declared *that he had nothing more to offer.*

† Mrs. W.'s answer was read nearly three months before. If she had misapprehended the "*essence* of the difficulty," why did he not set that point right the moment it was read? Why did he not *then* say—why here is a mistake. Mrs. W. thinks Dea. T. demanded something which never entered his thoughts. And yet he did not do it. After that paper was read, Judge W. argued the case on the ground that dancing was an innocent amusement, and that the church had therefore no right to forbid it. And at the next meeting, Parson T., so far from having perceived any *misunderstanding*, came into the vestry with a written document (see page 89 and onward) in which he asserted that the "Spirit of God was preaching" against dancing—that an "infinitely higher Power" than himself, had put a stop to it in a great measure—and that it was one of the "*sinful pleasures of the world.*" And he asserts that the church may discipline for a breach of the report—see page 95, third paragraph. See the whole of Mr. T.'s paper, and how utterly irreconcilable it is with what is now pretended.

JUDGE W. And will say it a hundred times more. The firmness she manifested was on the point of what she would allow in her family. All she said had reference to the right of allowing dancing if she pleased. She is most cruelly misrepresented if anything other than this is stated. She never understood that her "*spirit*" was complained of.

J. J. KILBURN. This point may be settled very easily by putting a single question to Mr. Daniel Weston.

D. C. W. Please to put it.

J. J. KILBURN. Did not Dr. T. expressly state to your mother, in your presence, that he had no intention of interfering with dancing in her family?

D. C. W. He said nothing of the kind. I recollect perfectly the conversation, and am rejoiced that I was present.

J. J. KILBURN. Dr. Tappan, don't you recollect making that remark?

DEA. T. I don't know that I do.

[Mr. Kilburn then took his seat.]

JUDGE W. Dr. Tappan, however harshly I may have spoken, I believe you to be an honest man, and that you fear God;* and I wish you to answer my question as you will have to answer at a future day. There have been great misrepresentations, but I hope not *designedly*.

* The reporter asked Judge W., subsequently, how he could speak of Dea. T. in this manner, after all that had passed. His reply was—"I said too much—more than I could say again. But he was formerly my family physician, and I have always had a friendly feeling for the man, and supposed him honest, though soured by a solitary life and gloomy religious notions. Even up to the time when I used this language, I could not help thinking that his intentions were good, (as I knew of no personal motive he could have for perverting the truth,) but that there was a moral hallucination upon his mind, and that he was but a tool in the hands of others. I *did* hope, by this solemn appeal, to elicit the truth, but the influence of his brother triumphed. His answer to my question was inconsistent with his previous testimony, and with all the other evidence in the case; and, I am sorry to say, seemed to be based upon no better foundation than the desire to sustain the new issue."

Did you tell Mrs. W. that it was the spirit she had manifested of which you complained; and did you understand when she said she would not be dictated to by the church, that she meant she would manifest such a spirit as she pleased in defiance of them?

DEA. T. I did so understand it.

JUDGE W. Then there has been the most egregious MISAPPREHENSION!!

Dr. SNELL. This might have all been prevented if we had been permitted to question Mrs. W.: but Judge W. put a stopper on that in the outset. Here we have been working in the dark.* It would be very easy to set the matter right colloquially. Judge W. has said he thinks Dr. T. an honest man and one who fears God. I think Mrs. W. is a woman of the same spirit. Let her consent to converse. If we can't have this light upon the case, let it hang up till we can. If she won't answer, the bible points out the course to be pursued.

C. DOLE. The church is just where it was when we started, with the exception of what head-way we have made to night. I still wish to ask Mrs. W. certain questions.

DEA. MEANS. A great portion of this has been a misunderstanding. Won't there be an advantage in appointing a committee to see Mrs. W.

JUDGE W. objected.

C. DOLE insisted that she must be present or a committee appointed. He wanted to ask whether Mrs. W. understood that her *spirit* was complained of.

JUDGE W. She was complained of for allowing dancing after the church had forbidden it. Nothing was farther from her heart than to show a wanton disregard of the feelings of the church.

C. DOLE. If she will say *that*, I will venture to assert that there has been a *misunderstanding*, and the gist of the complaint falls to the ground.†

*True enough—he was a member of the secret caucus.

† See Mrs. W.'s answer to the complaint (pages 69 and 70) where she has already said what he *now* pretends would be sufficient. See also page

D. WILLIAMS inquired if it would not be possible to get out all the testimony to night?

C. DOLE said it would not. He had more questions to put to Dr. T. similar to those he had asked that evening.

D. C. W. stated his intention of cross examining Dr. T., after Mr. Dole had finished.

Adjourned to Friday evening next.

CHAPTER XIV.

"For Presbyter and Independant
Were now turned Plaintiff and Defendant;
Laid out their apostolic Functions,
On carnal Orders and Injunctions;
And all their precious Gifts and Graces
On Outlawries and Seire facias;
At Michael's Term had many a trial,
Worse than the Dragon and St. Michael." HUDIBRAS.

Friday evening, July 31st.

The Pastor opened the proceedings by defending the "social interview" at Dea. M.'s house on the ground, taken by Mr. Dole, that there was a distinction between "personal and *public offences*." When, said he, public offences are committed—and this, if an offence, was a PUBLIC ONE*—members are not bound to follow Matt.

49 where Dea. T. admits she said all that was *now* required. It was impossible that the church could have supposed that Mrs. W. intended wantonly to disregard their feelings, because, as will be recollected, *this dancing took place at a regular meeting of the "Winter circle," which met once a fortnight, and generally, if not always, engaged in this amusement.*

* We should have hoped that a Doctor of Divinity would not have followed suit to Mr. Dole and called this a "*public offence*" in order to excuse the caucus. See note, page 35, which places this in its true light.

18th.* What is more natural than for all who feel aggrieved to get together, as in this case, and talk over the subject which has occasioned their grief!

He then alluded to the subject of order, and said that parliamentary rules should be observed; that reproachful and reviling language could not be permitted. Heretofore there had been a departure from proper rules, but he had not thought proper to interrupt the proceedings by calling members to order. He had failed in this duty; but allowance should be made for the trying situation in which he was placed. Hereafter all irrelevant matter was to be excluded.

J. H. HARTWELL inquired how the matter stood with regard to the proposition of Judge W. to submit the whole affair to President Wayland.

JUDGE W. here recapitulated his reasons for offering that proposition, but said it was of no use to offer reasons. No notice had been taken of his offer.

C. DOLE. Was it left with the church?

JUDGE W. It was left in the ear of the church.

The PASTOR said that he could'nt notice it because a report was then under consideration, and a motion made thereon that he must put.

JUDGE W. said he had protested against their jurisdiction. The rights of the minority were gone if the majority decided on their own powers. The affair was not, as at first pretended, between the complainant, and the accused, but between this *caucus*, which had been dragged to light, and the accused. Unpleasant feeling had arisen on both sides, and he had supposed it but fair to leave the case to some impartial man. But the acceptance of the report had decided that the minority were wholly at the mercy of the majority.

D. C. WESTON here called upon Mr. Dole to proceed with his questions to Dea. T. after which, he said, he

* Why was it pretended that Matt. 18th had been followed? Here it was proved that they had gone contrary to it. Very well, say they, we were "not bound to follow Matt. 18." But why send an agent forth upon the troubled waters, and instruct him to return, not with an olive branch, but with a lie in his mouth?

intended to cross examine that individual, and introduce some testimony.

Some doubts were here thrown out as to what was before the meeting: but on motion of D. Williams, it was voted to resume the case of Mrs. W.

C. DOLE said he did not know as he had any further questions. He had, to be sure, asked some, but erred in so doing, the party complained of not being present. He then insisted that they could not proceed without the presence of Mrs. W. unless some good reason could be stated therefor.

D. C. W. I will state a reason. Mrs. W. was not present on the last evening; and yet you proceeded to question Dea. T. and get out such testimony as you wished; and no objection was made on account of her absence. I wish to examine the same person, and put in some testimony to the same point to which he then testified. It will be grossly unjust, if after you have attempted to produce a certain impression, we are not allowed to contradict the evidence that was then introduced.

C. DOLE. Why did you not ask your questions on the last evening?

D. C. W. Because there was no time. You had not finished your questions.

C. DOLE said he was aware of that, but insisted that questions could not be put, in the absence of the accused.*

J. HOOPER thought it would be very improper to proceed without Mrs. W. It would'nt be allowed in a court of justice.

D. WILLIAMS would have been glad to have seen her there, but that point was settled. Dr. T. had made his statements and Mrs. W. had put in her answer. She had pleaded. She thought the proceedings of the church had not been kind to her. Assuming then, that she would not be there again, should they

* No better commentary on Dea. T.'s testimony at the previous meeting could possibly be given, than this refusal to allow him to be cross examined.

suspend the proceedings, and keep up the excitement? Her presence there was for *her own benefit*, and if the church proceeded in her absence, she was the only one who could complain. She had, therefore a right to waive her privilege of being present.

C. DOLE thought she could not waive it. If she refused to hear the church, *the bible pointed out the proper course to be pursued.*

D. WILLIAMS. She has appeared and answered.

C. DOLE. I understand that: but her presence is as necessary in one part of the trial as another. The offence of not appearing *may* be greater than the offence charged. My mind is in some doubt whether the *offence of not appearing*, should be a consideration *subsequent* to this case, or be considered as *a part of it*.

J. H. HARTWELL thought that as they had proceeded to a certain extent without her, it was better to go on, and get out the testimony.

Dr. SNELL. We can't proceed without her. She ought to be present and answer.

D. WILLIAMS. She has put in her answer.

Dr. SNELL. We want to get at her *spirit*, and must therefore see her. Is it manifesting the spirit of Christ for her to refuse to answer?

JUDGE W. (with considerable emotion.) Refuses to answer! Did not she answer the complainant for four hours? Has the church declared her delinquent? It was declared again and again that if the church would decide she was guilty they might then take such farther steps as they should deem necessary. *Refuses to answer! She has answered fully.* She has an answer here to night. Certain members *did* propose to question her, and she did not choose to submit to their interrogatories because she doubted their friendship, and distrusted their purposes. Do those members claim that *they* are the church? Perhaps they are. I am aware that it is in the nature of bodies like this that a few should have the control.

Is it not enough that you have done what you could, to

hold Mrs. W. up to the scorn of the whole State? is it not enough that she has appeared before your tribunal for five evenings, but you crave the pleasure of seeing her here again? It is a pleasure that you will not have.——*

DEA. T. Order. Order.

JUDGE W. I am apprehensive that I may have been out of order, but I could not restrain myself. I hope gentlemen will excuse me.

C. DOLE. Two members wanted to ask questions and she refused to answer. Refusing to answer is a disregard of the church amounting to *contumacy*. [He here read from an authority to support this position.] He then repeated the remarks he had previously made on the "bible method" of conducting a grievance.

D. WILLIAMS here spoke at some length. How did the case stand? Dr. T. had professed himself aggrieved, and the *gist* of the charge related to the *spirit* of the accused. He understood that the church did not claim the right to interfere with the act itself.† Now when Dr. T. called upon her, she reiterated again and again, how sorry she was she had injured his feelings—that so far as she had injured them or those of others she regretted it. This was sufficient—amply sufficient. The manner of giving the invitation was wrong and he

*The fact that Mrs. W. refused to be interrogated by DEA. T. and CARLETON DOLE, is another of those straws upon which they attempted to fasten. The first question that Mrs. W. was asked, was an insult, (see page 48) and the next was *intended* for a trap, (see page 75) and what assurance had she that those to follow would not have been of a similar character? The questions that Dea. Tappan wished to put related (page 73) to "certain *apparent* discrepancies." What Mr. Dole's questions would have been about is not known. The reader will judge whether Mrs. W. had not said enough in her first statement. No question was put to her by order of the church.

†Mr. Williams was not at home when the complaints were filed, and did not return till *after* the "withdrawal." When he did return, he obtained his facts from Mr. Dole, whose promises to him, (page 57,) will be recollected. Mr. D., of course, was obliged to explain this case in a manner consistent with those promises; and this accounts for Mr. W.'s being temporarily deceived.

regretted it.* He had no doubt Mrs. W. regretted it. But the complainant had called with Mr. Kilburn and had proposed a certain question, which had been stated,† and she had vindicated herself and refused to concede what she considered he had no right to ask.

It seemed to him we could act upon the case as it was. Dr. T. had said there was some neutralizing matter, and he had stated it. The church could judge of it. *He had seen her and was satisfied with her spirit.* Dr. T. had had a pleasant conversation with her of more than two hours, and had called again on the following evening. The charge was immediately thereupon presented, and she set aside from communion. He could not account for this haste. He spoke in the fear of God when he said it. Three days before the charges were filed was all the notice she had. Why was this haste? Had it been a case of great magnitude, there would have been some excuse. Had she been approached in the right spirit this trouble would have been prevented. She thought the church had not conducted towards her with that kindness and good fellowship due to so old a member; and she had too much reason to complain. It seemed to him that the seeds of this unpleasant controversy might not have been sown. He didn't know whether other brethren were satisfied, but the accused had satisfied him that she had no intention of injuring the feelings of the church. The issue we were to try was—is she guilty or not guilty? He did not know the usage, but he hoped we could proceed with the matter and bring it to a close.

C. DOLE was pleased with a portion of D. Williams'

* Here was another impression obtained perhaps from Mr. Dole. What invitation had Mrs. W. given? She had fixed the time at which the society might meet at her house, and then added playfully, "you may dance as much as you please." So slight was the impression made upon the young lady, by this remark, that when she told the society they were to meet at Mrs. W.'s the next time, she did not mention it. Afterwards, on being asked by some of the girls, if she thought Mrs. W. would let them dance, she replied, "O, yes! she says we may."

† That she should say she was sorry and would not do so again.

remarks, but the church ought to have communication with Mrs. W. by note or otherwise. D. Williams had had satisfaction, and he wanted to have satisfaction in the same way. D. W. had had the advantage of him.

D. WILLIAMS. Have you called upon her.

C. DOLE. I have not.

D. W. You are a near neighbor of hers, are you not?

C. DOLE. I am. I could state my reasons but they would perhaps be irrelevant. Mr. Williams has stated truly, that the gist of the complaint is the *spirit* manifested. This was shown by the language of Mrs. W., and he wanted to have satisfaction on that point.*

D. C. W. She has explained the language.

C. DOLE here remarked that no one there knew his mind so well as Mr. Williams. He then referred to the "neutralizing matter."

JUDGE REDINGTON remarked in substance that he had been present but an evening or two, and on that account might be excused from acting. But he did not wish to avoid responsibility. What progress were they making? Mrs. W. would not probably be there. It was so stated by Judge Weston. Was this a settled point? If so, why not proceed? It could not be disguised that until this case was closed there would be excitement. Unhallowed and unsanctified emotions would be roused. If Mrs. W. would not be present, he thought it proper to go on and get out the testimony. He hoped they might do so, but did not profess to be acquainted with ecclesiastical law.

JUDGE W. here repeated some of his former remarks. If the church had decided that Mrs. W. was wrong, as the case stood, she would have answered any questions.

* The expression referred to, "you may dance as much as you please," was a playful one, made in her own house at a time when nothing was talked of but "dancing," to a young lady, whose parents were not members of the church. It was communicated, *on the same day*, to Dea. T. by a young lady who happened to be at Judge W.'s, reading to his daughter. If this was the ground of complaint, why was not the caucus immediately called? But no: this meeting was not called until a fortnight afterwards, *immediately following the "vindication."*

She did not then know of the combination against her. That had come out within a few days. Had the church decided on the fifth evening that the complaint had been sustained she would have answered farther: but now the feeling of unkindness was strong upon her.

JUDGE R. Will she be present, or likely to meet a committee?

JUDGE W. Not such a committee as the church would be likely to appoint.

JUDGE R. thought that in that case, if there was any farther testimony, it ought to come out.

PASTOR. Would it not be better, Judge W., for Mrs. W. to be present, and answer questions, and furnish the church with wherewith to acquit her, instead of forcing them to condemn her as the case stood?

JUDGE W. It would be impossible for me to answer that question without saying something out of order.

Here D. C. Weston stated that he had a paper, signed by his mother, which he wished to read. He said that it would remove all doubt, if any remained, upon an important point.

Notwithstanding some objection, the reading was called for by various gentlemen, and it was read. The following is a copy.

MRS. WESTON'S SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT.

"To the South Parish Church.

The statements of Deacon Tappan to the church on Wednesday evening, having been reported to the undersigned, she deems it due to the cause of truth to communicate the following.

As Deacon Tappan is the complainant, and as he has never heretofore, either in the vestry or out of it, to the knowledge of the accused, alleged that it was any improper spirit of hers of which he complained, but only certain "conduct" and "speech" which was in opposition to the views of the church, as expressed in the Report drawn up by himself and Carleton Dole, she

has never thought proper to reply to the assertions (which other persons than her accuser have made since her husband argued her cause) that it was her *spirit* which had been the occasion of grief. Deacon Tappan in his interviews with her by himself and Mr. Kilburn, laid no stress at all upon the remark which he says she made, merely asking her if it was true, but throughout contended that it was wrong for her to allow dancing after so large a majority of the church had expressed their disapprobation of it.

When the accused contended that the church had no right to dictate to her upon the subject of dancing in her house, he insisted distinctly and repeatedly that they had; and when her son said they had no more right to do so than they had to dictate who he should vote for, for President of the United States, he replied that that was a different case.

Her daughter said to the Deacon, "why don't you deal with all the members of the church, who countenance dancing as we do?" His reply was, "one at a time, Mrs. Fuller."

The accused asked him if he did not think it was wicked to spend so much time in talking about dancing. He replied "no, I don't think it is." The accused asked him if he expected she should act differently with regard to *dancing* after the acceptance of the Report, than before, and if he expected she was to be bound by it. He replied, "certainly Mrs. Weston, if you act contrary to the opinions there expressed, I cannot walk with you, I can have no fellowship with you." She stated that it never had occurred to her that he expected she should act differently. He said that what aggravated the dancing at her house was, that it was so soon after the acceptance of the Report, and that the church could not consistently allow any member to act contrary to the Report. Deacon Tappan said if he was going by the house of a professor of religion, and heard music and dancing, his opinion of their piety would be lowered.

Mr. Kilburn said "it was of course different with peo-

ple in the country, but that fiddling and dancing were connected in his mind with the houses on a certain street in Boston." The accused replied, that knowing nothing about such places, her associations were different; that it was connected in her mind with innocence and cheerfulness.

The whole time was spent by Deacon Tappan on his first visit and by Deacon Tappan and Mr. Kilburn on the second, in arguing against the propriety of dancing generally, and against her right to allow it, after the church had forbidden it, even if she did suppose it innocent. And on her part in defending this amusement, and in contending that the church had no right to compel her to abandon it. No other issue was made up between them and nothing passed, which could by any possibility be tortured into an accusation against her spirit.

So far from Deacon Tappan's having admitted her right to allow dancing, as before remarked, he repeatedly, unequivocally and promptly denied her that right.

The accused asked him with tears at the conclusion of the last interview, what it was he wanted of her. His reply was, that he wanted her to say she was sorry, and would not do so again; she replied she could not say she was sorry, not being conscious of having done wrong, and that she did not think she was bound to give pledges for the future; that there probably would not be much more dancing until another winter, and that we might not live until that time.

They then left the house: in all the conversation that passed, there was none of a different tenor from that here given.

Judge then of her surprise and astonishment, when the testimony of Deacon Tappan given on Wednesday evening last, was detailed to her. She regrets that her ancient friend whom she has heretofore esteemed, should be induced to attempt at this late day to change the issue, in order to relieve himself, his brother or the church, from an untenable position; but she forgets herself in her regret for the injury he has thus inflicted upon

the cause of Christ. May the Holy Spirit lead him to repentance, and may God forgive him, as she does, and may he be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

That we may all meet where there will be no temptation to sin, where all domination of man over man will cease; where mutual confidence and affection will be restored, and where all language will be the voice of truth, is the prayer of the undersigned, who makes these statements deliberately, carefully, and as one who must stand with her accuser at the bar of God.

(Signed) PAULINA B. WESTON.

Augusta, July 31st, 1840."

J. J. KILBURN. Is Mrs. W.'s name to that?

D. C. W. It is.

J. J. K. had felt very unpleasantly about the whole affair. He had objected to going with Dr. Tappan, but thought it his duty to do so. His interview with Mrs. W. was pleasant, and he endeavored to present to her his views. He thought there had been cause of grief; and there was nothing in his interview to remove it—nor had anything occurred since to satisfy him. He had listened to the paper that had been read, and thought there was a discrepancy between that and what took place at the time——

D. C. W. I have no objection to Mr. K.'s stating what took place at his interview with Mrs. W., provided I can have the privilege of cross examining him, and also of putting in the testimony of two other witnesses, who were present at the time. But here Mr. K. will be allowed to make such statements as he pleases, and when I ask him a question some one will start up and say that we cannot proceed in the absence of the accused. Now I object to this as unfair.

J. H. HARTWELL. Of course you will be allowed to put in your testimony.

D. C. W. It was not allowed after Mr. Dole had questioned Dea. T., you will recollect.

C. DOLE said that Mr. K. had a right to go on, and ought not to be interrupted.

D. C. W. Certainly, if I can question him afterwards and bring forward testimony to the same point. But this getting out evidence on one side and refusing it on the other, is *mob law*, and I'll not submit to it.

C. DOLE said if Mr. Weston had not interrupted him, he was going to have stated that Mr. K. ought not to state anything except as to his *own feelings*.

J. H. HARTWELL. Mr. K. committed himself.

J. J. KILBURN said a good deal had been said about insinuations against Mrs. W. *out of the vestry*. He never had made any. He had not testified as yet.

JUDGE W. If you have any evidence to give, give it; so that it shall not be said there was anything kept back.

J. J. K. felt himself in an unpleasant situation. He did not want to make statements about what passed at that interview, except in her presence. He wanted to see her. He did not want what he said reported to her.

JUDGE W. If you deny what she has stated she will meet you. She is not afraid to meet *you*, sir, on a question of veracity; and I perceive it has come to that.

C. DOLE. The paper which has been read has thrown new light into my mind. He then went on to say that he thought they all spoke the truth, but that there was a misunderstanding which explained everything.

T. LITTLE wanted to submit a proposition. The more people had seen of Mrs. W. the better she had appeared. He had in former times had many pleasant interviews with her, and they had heretofore been friendly. He wanted a committee appointed to converse with her.

C. DOLE said he had a minute of the same purport, which he had intended to present.

DEA. MEANS thought they could not get along without a *committee*.

JUDGE W. I am utterly and totally *disgusted* with your whole proceedings. When there is nothing against

the accused—when all your ingenuity can draw out nothing against her—instead of dismissing the complaint, you want a *committee*. “We can’t get along without a COMMITTEE.” If you will do me the favor to expel Mrs. W., and make an end of this business, I shall be very much obliged to you. It will be far preferable to her I am sure.

DEA. T. (in great excitement.) I have been treated, you know how. The church has been treated, you know how. Mrs. W. has utterly refused to answer questions, and she has withdrawn from the church; and we don’t know whether she considers herself a member or not. It is altogether improper for us to go on in this way. I will not submit to be questioned. I will not answer any more questions till she is present.

D. C. W. You answered Mr. Dole’s questions on the last evening, when she was not here.

C. DOLE. You mean that you won’t answer any questions unless the church direct you to?

DEA. T. That is what I mean. Here a paper has been read——

D. C. W. Which is true every word of it. You stated in substance the same thing to me in my office. Are you willing I should state what you there said?

DEA. T. No. I don’t know what that has to do with the case. It is irrelevant.

D. C. W. I offer it nevertheless.*

* On the afternoon of the Monday following the withdrawal from the church of Judge W. and his wife, D. C. Weston left town for an absence of some weeks; and on the forenoon of that day, Dea. Tappan came into his office, apparently a good deal distressed with the course that things had taken. He said that he did not feel reconciled to have Mr. W. leave town without an interview. Mr. W. took his extended hand, and asked him to be seated.

“You are going away now,” said he, “and do try to get out of your mind, if possible, what has taken place. If you do speak of our trouble, represent us in as favorable a light as you can, and be careful to set down nought in malice.” The irritation that Mr. W. felt towards him, vanished before his evident distress; and he assured him that he bore him no malice, and that he would be careful to do him no injustice by his representations.

D. WILLIAMS. What do you mean by saying in the complaint that Mrs. W. showed an utter disregard of the feelings and views of the church?

DEA. T. I mean that she showed it by allowing the dancing. I cannot separate the spirit from the act. He then went on to state, in reply to further questions from Mr. Williams, that the *bad spirit was manifested in the invitation* to the children—that the offence was completed then, *if a foot had not been moved afterwards*.

C. DOLE here remarked that he wanted to ask questions of Mrs. W. She ought to be present. He did'nt

Dea. T. then went on to say—"some persons have blamed your father very much for his severity in the vestry. But look at it. Here he came home to his family on Saturday night from his official duties and found his wife and children suspended from communion! He was severe, but I can't blame him for defending his family."

Mr. W. then said, "Dr. there is one misrepresentation that you are bound in justice to correct. It has been said that you did not complain of the dancing, but of the "*spirit*" with which it was allowed. Now you know perfectly well that all you found fault with was the *dancing*."

"I know it," he replied. "All I complained of was the dancing. That was what I thought wrong, and what I now think wrong; and I regret that when I heard she was going to allow it, that I had not gone right over and persuaded her from it, and thus have saved the trouble."

He then went on to say that no church member could properly allow dancing after the acceptance of that report; and that his cause of grievance consisted in the fact that Mrs. W. would not give up her views to those of the church. "She received me," said he, "kindly and courteously as she always receives her friends, and there was nothing of which I could complain during my interviews except that she refused to yield to the majority." As he was going out, he said he did not want me to understand that he "look back" anything. "I do not say" said he, "that I think I have acted wrong, though perhaps I may say it hereafter. That I was hasty I admit."

This conversation Mr. W. stated to several persons on the day that it occurred; and it is what he would have testified to in the vestry had not Dea. T. shut it out as "*irrelevant*."

It will be perceived that now after the lapse of several months, when pressed by Mr. Dole who deemed it vitally important to the interests of the church that the issue should be thoroughly changed, he speaks, as if his

know whether the original offence ought to be decided on its own merits, or whether the subsequent refusal to appear before the church, should be mixed up with it, and all be considered together. The refusal to appear might be greater than the offence charged. It might be considered *contumacy*. [He here read from an authority to support this position.]

JUDGE W. I perceive you intend to excommunicate Mrs. W.; and I wish you would do it now, and make an end of it.

C. DOLE thought he might be mistaken.

cause of complaint had nothing to do with dancing; though it will be noticed that he occasionally says that *the spirit was manifested by the act*—that he *cannot separate the spirit from the act*.

It may not be out of place to observe here, that AFTER THIS CASE WAS OVER, Dea. T., in the presence of JUDGE REDINGTON, made the following statements. The case of D. C. Weston was then under examination, and especially that charge which related to his playing on the violin for the children to dance.

He said that he did not mean that the act itself was wrong, *but that to play for the children, after the church had expressed their disapprobation of dancing, showed a bad spirit*, of which he had a right to complain.

So about this allowing of dancing and this playing on the piano for that purpose: I do not complain that this is wrong in itself, but that it is wrong—that it shows a *bad spirit*, after the church have expressed disapprobation of dancing. The spirit is manifested by the act.

The above is substantially what he said on this occasion. It will be seen that this effectually prohibits all dancing, and all playing for that purpose: for if either of these things are done, the act manifests a "*bad spirit*" which must be disciplined.

The Deacon carries his doctrine far beyond anything we ever heard of, and places the minority at the mercy of the majority in all things—even those acknowledged innocent. They may vote that christians should take but one meal per day; and then if one is detected in eating two, he must be disciplined—not that the act is wrong in itself, but that it shows a *bad spirit* to act against the views of the majority.

This was what he finally settled down upon after mature deliberation; and it totally demolishes of itself, if there was nothing else in the case to do it, the poor pretence of Mr. Dole and others, that Mrs. W. had "misunderstood the *essence of the difficulty*."

DEA. MEANS wanted Mrs. W. notified of the acceptance of the report by which she was declared still to be a member.

Here an adjournment was called for: but Mrs. C. M. Fuller presenting a request that her case might be disposed of, so that she could be dismissed, and recommended to St. Mark's Church in Augusta, in season to be confirmed by the Bishop, who was shortly expected, the following Monday was assigned for her trial, at 6½ o'clock, P. M.

Adjourned to Monday evening.

CHAPTER XV.

"Who, but she,
Knows the wild harpings of our native land?"

Halidon Hill.

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." *Pov. xiv, 26.*

"*Apollyon.* How is it then that thou hast run away from thy King? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

"*Christian.* I was born indeed in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on; "for the wages of sin is death;" therefore when I was come to years, I did as other considerate persons do, look out if perhaps I might mend myself."

Pilgrim's Progress.

Monday evening, August 3.

This evening was assigned for the trial of Mrs. C. M. Fuller. It will be recollected that the complaint against her was made on the first day of May, (something more than three months prior to the present date) and that she was thereupon suspended from communion by the resolve introduced by E. Craig. That suspension had never been removed.

What rendered this case a little remarkable was the fact that the complaint had been filed, without any preliminary process having been served upon the defendant. True the new fangled doctrine, got up *pro hac vice*, with regard to "public offences," might obviate this difficulty in the minds of the Pastor and Mr. Dole. But even if not bound to follow Matt. 18th, on account of the *magnitude* of the offence, official comity would seem to have required that the aggrieved party, who held the office of Deacon, should have intimated to the accused, who was a monthly tract distributor, and Sunday school teacher, that she had fallen under his high displeasure.

The PASTOR opened the proceedings by reading the complaint—to wit—"This complainant feels in like manner aggrieved by the conduct of Mrs. C. M. Fuller, also a member of this church, for having, both in *conversation* and PRACTICALLY, exhibited the same disregard of the recorded expression of the almost unanimous opinion of the church on the subject of DANCING, as set forth in the acceptance of the Report."

D. C. W. Will you oblige me by reading the concluding remarks of the complainant?

The PASTOR again took up the paper and resumed.

"The complainant does not tell this to the church without having tried to obtain satisfaction in PRIVATE INTERVIEWS with these members, AGREEABLY TO THE DIRECTION OF OUR SAVIOUR IN MATT. 18, both by himself and brother Kilburn. But not satisfied with the state of mind and feeling, exhibited by the parties complained of, he thinks himself bound by covenant obligations TO BRING THE MATTER BEFORE THE CHURCH that they may act on the subject as they may deem best."*

DEA. T. here stated that he did not think the complaint was properly presented. He was free to say that strictly and technically, the rules of our Saviour had not been complied with. He did not ask for a private interview, and did not have one. She and her brother were

* The discovery of the caucus, at the house of Dea. Means, rendered this a perfect farce

present when he saw her mother. He had not placed distinctly before her the cause of grief. He acknowledged he had therefore wronged her, and confessed to the church that he had not presented the complaint before satisfaction sought, according to the command of our Saviour. At the interview spoken of, there was excitement. They were all talking together. He did not know what was said*. He was under the impression that the ground of complaint was *notorious*. He concluded by asking pardon of Mrs. Fuller and the church, and with the wish to withdraw his complaint.

On motion of J. H. HARTWELL leave was granted to withdraw his complaint.

The PASTOR then stated that if any member had anything against Mrs. F., it was a good time to bring it forward.

C. DOLE thereupon inquired why she had broken her covenant by going to another meeting since the filing of the above complaint.

D. C. W. objected to this course of inquiry; and an interesting discussion arose on the duty of church members, to attend constantly the preaching of their own pastor.

JUDGE REDINGTON said that the subject was important, though somewhat difficult. Might not a person go *once* to another meeting? And if so, why not *twice* or *three* times? And who was to fix the limits, and draw the line where it ceased to be proper, and became a breach of the covenant?

C. DOLE said he had authorities to show that a member who went a single half day with "itching ears," was obnoxious to censure.

The PASTOR thought it important that the subject should be understood.

* What a confession is this! Within a few days of the interview, he testified with regard to it, and though repeatedly called upon for "more light"—said he had *nothing more to offer*. When importuned three months afterwards, (within a few days of the present time) he gives in testimony conflicting with his first statements, and now he says he don't "know what was said!"

Various members stated that they had no idea it was wrong to hear another man preach occasionally.

C. DOLE repeated his inquiry to Mrs. F., and insisted upon an answer.

MRS. FULLER replied that the church had first broken the covenant, which was *mutual*, and that it had therefore ceased to be binding upon her.

D. WILLIAMS wished to know how far this doctrine was to be carried: because if when members requested a dismission it was to be objected that they had recently attended another meeting, it came rather near home.*

THE PASTOR said the case of Mrs. Williams was different, she having stated to him, when she joined the church, that, if an Episcopal society was ever formed in town, she should join it.

JUDGE R. I do not see as that alters the case. They must all come under one rule.

THE PASTOR insisted that it *did* alter the case.

JUDGE R. insisted that it did *not*. They all took upon them the same covenant; and any mental or verbal reservations amounted to nothing.

T. LITTLE thought if any one intended joining another church, there was nothing out of the way in attending there two or three months previously.

DEA. T. wanted Mrs. F. to allow the case to be deferred so that he could have some conversation with her.

Mrs. F. replied that she did not wish to give any further opportunity, if she could help it, of commencing a new process.

THE PASTOR wanted Mrs. F.'s defence read.

D. C. W. said there was no occasion for reading it, the complaint having been withdrawn.

D. WILLIAMS said there was no complaint against Mrs. F. She stood precisely as if there had never been any. As to her going to another place of worship. Peo-

* Requests for dismission were that moment on the table of the moderator, from the wife of this gentleman and two other ladies, *neither of whom had heard Mr. Tappan preach for the last three months*, but had attended the same church with Mrs. F.

ple attended church to worship God, and to be benefitted thereby. Mrs. F. had been set aside from their communion, her feelings had been wounded; and perhaps she felt that her presence was not desired at all. He saw no reason why she should not be regularly dismissed.

JUDGE R. said that Dr. T. had spoken of *notoriety*. Some offences were of so *public* a nature that Matt. 18th did not apply. Those were OPEN, GLARING offences. He was not apprised that, that was the case with Mrs. F. And as she had had no opportunity of explaining, the complaint was withdrawn. She was in good standing. He would ask the Pastor if there was any objection to her? Was she not entitled to a regular dismissal?

PASTOR. If members are in good standing, they are entitled to it. It may be, however, that when a request for dismission is presented, the minds of members may be *laboring*. They may not be prepared to say that the person stands well in their esteem; and in that case they cannot vote for a statement which does not accord with their belief, and recommend one to another church as in good standing. He then went on to say, if any one had any *difficulties*, that was the time to state them and enquire about them.

JUDGE R. remarked that he had been *mistaken*. He had *supposed* that when there was no complaint against a member, that member was in good standing, but he was *misinformed*.

THE PASTOR said this case was somewhat peculiar. There *had been* a complaint. Others were grieved as well as the brother who presented it, and it was desirable that they should have some satisfaction with respect to the subject matter of the complaint.

D. C. W. remarked that he should like to have Mrs. F.'s request acted upon. It was a matter of indifference whether it was granted or not.

Here a motion was made and seconded to dismiss Mrs. F. and recommend her to St. Marks.

DR. SNELL. Her brother says it is a matter of indifference to her whether she is dismissed or not.

D. WILLIAMS. *She did not say it.*

D. C. W. said that he meant that nothing *they* could do, would hinder her from being received into St. Marks.

C. DOLE was aware of that, and supposed that to be what Mr. W. meant.

J. L. CHILD advocated the passage of the motion. There was no complaint. Was there any evidence that Mrs. F. was not in good standing? And if not, had the church a right to take the ground that complaints *might* be brought?

C. DOLE thought it would not be uninteresting to read from Mitchell's Guide. [Here he read some extracts.] After some farther conversation,

C. DOLE remarked that he was gratified with the traits exhibited by the complainant. There should always be frankness and ingenuousness. The wisdom of man was foolishness. With respect to sister Fuller he had nothing to say.

PASTOR. Those in favor of the motion please to manifest it.

He then called for the "contrary minded" though no one doubted the vote; an invariable practice of his when he wishes a motion to miscarry: But this time no dissenting hand was raised; and Mrs. F. was regularly dismissed and recommended to St. Marks.

The above account of this evening's proceedings, is a condensed abstract from the copious minutes of the reporter, who, while he has not felt himself called upon to make so full a report as upon the case of Mrs. W. has endeavored to omit nothing material.

"With respect to the subject matter of the complaint," about which the Pastor thought the minds of members were "*laboring*," perhaps there may exist some curiosity; and the whole is so ridiculously frivolous, so like "the baseless fabric of a vision," that we cannot refrain from bestowing a few remarks upon the subject.

The *practical* disregard of the opinions of the church

complained of, as we have before stated, consisted in PLAYING ON THE PIANO, on that memorable occasion, for the "Winter circle." Dea. T. did not pretend that she had been personally guilty of dancing. As to the "conversation" complained of. Mrs. F., having some curiosity to know what remarks of hers had grieved her accuser, which could not be otherwise gratified, addressed a note to him, on the day following the filing of the complaint, asking for information upon that subject, to which, she received the following reply.

"Monday Morning.

Mrs. Fuller:—

The remarks made by you and which were in part the ground of complaint, were *stated to me*, and believed to have been uttered at the same interview with those of your mother, also complained of, and were as follows, or like import—"we are all dancers here"—and, "the next thing the church will put down speaking."

As I did not return home until after 9 o'clock on Sat. Eve., and then had no one whom I could send, I trust you will excuse this delay to answer your note.

E. S. TAPPAN."

In explanation of the first expression, we would observe that the church was divided into two parties;—those in favor of the report of Messrs. Dole & Tappan, were called, "the anti dancing party," and those against it, "the dancers;" and "we are all dancers here" merely meant that "we" belonged to the latter class.

The last remark specified, if ever made, turned out to be just, and under the circumstances was natural. "If the *first* evidence of fraternal regard," says President Wayland, "consists in the violation of my liberty, what the *last* will be, it is somewhat difficult to conjecture."

Such was the whole ground of complaint against this lady; and that the pastor and others were well acquainted with it, is evident from the fact that Dea. T. acted as the *agent* of a *grieved secret caucus*, composed of a *select*

and **PACKED** portion of the brethren, called together to see what "should be done with Judge Weston's family." The *agent* performed his portion of the contract by filing the charge, and the *principals* theirs, by forthwith suspending the victim.

One or two points in this case deserve attention. The offence charged, if true, either deserved suspension or it did not. If not, then was the accused treated with cruel injustice. If it did, how, *while it was unrepented of, and unacknowledged*, and she deemed to be so much in the "gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity," as to be unworthy of a seat at the table of her Saviour, could they recommend her to another church?

What if Matt. 18th had not been pursued and the complaint was not properly before them! If an **AGGRAVATED SIN** had been committed, this recommendation of the perpetrator was a gross violation of their duty to a sister society. It was their duty to have "sifted" the affair to the bottom; and if this complaint was not properly before them, to have taken measures for the commencement of a new process, according to Matt. 18th, in order to save themselves from reproach, and others from having fastened upon their communion an unworthy member. Does not, then, her dismissal, and recommendation as a member in good standing, show a *consciousness of the frivolity of the charge*, and a total want of that sincerity which alone can redeem fanaticism from contempt?

Again. Here was a complaint made, by a Deacon, under the direction of the Pastor, and some fifteen or twenty others, in part, for certain "conversation," which, perhaps, had never taken place. It had, to be sure, been "stated" to the Deacon (into whose greedy ears every lisp against "the report," sank with the rapidity and perhaps with something of the sensation of melted lead) as having been uttered in the privacy of Mrs. F.'s own home. The watch maintained by these people would actually put the French system of espionage to the blush. "Because," says a pious and elegant writer,*

* Dr. Channing.

"we live in a country, where the gross, outward, visible chain is broken, we must not conclude that we are necessarily free. There are chains, not made of iron, which cut more deeply into the soul. AN ESPIONAGE OF BIGOTRY may as effectually close our lips and chill our hearts, as an armed and hundred-eyed police.—We say we have no Inquisition. But a sect, SKILFULLY ORGANIZED, TRAINED to utter ONE CRY, COMBINED to cover with reproach whoever may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace—such a sect is as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the Inquisition. It serves the minister as effectually as the sword." But to return. Suppose any explanation of the language said to be used by Mrs. F. was needed, (which we deny) why did he not ask it? Why not give her an opportunity of denying the expressions, if not used, or of explaining or justifying them if uttered? Why present a complaint and call for a suspension, and thus do all in his power publicly to disgrace one, whose spiritual welfare was the ostensible motive of his action? Can the history of church discipline furnish a parallel to so monstrous a proceeding? And then, as if some farther outrage was necessary to place the act beyond the possibility of competition, the complainant says "he does not tell this to the church without having tried to obtain satisfaction, in private interviews," according to the direction of our Saviour in Matt. 18th—a statement grossly untrue, as appears by the caucus, by his own confession, and by the fact that the accused, *after* she had been publicly censured, was obliged to apply to her accuser for the cause of her punishment.

Suppose she had greatly erred: was this the way to recover an offending sister? Are her feelings first to be lacerated, as a suitable preparation for that friendly expostulation which is to bring her back to the path of duty? Are people in the garb of men, and calling

themselves christians, secretly to combine against a woman, and censure her unheard; and then, when the complaint has been withdrawn and their injustice made manifest, and she stands before them, raised through the mercy of God, from a dangerous illness into which their proceedings had thrown her, and pale from recent suffering, is the Pastor, (the ringleader of the persecutions) instead of soothing her wounded feelings, to invite members to bring forward farther charges? And, in obedience to that call, is she to be taunted with the inquiry, why she had left the preaching of her persecutor—when they well knew that their unkind treatment had compelled her to seek refuge in another sanctuary?

Before closing this chapter, we wish to call attention to another fact, illustrative of the elastic nature of the principles advanced in these cases.

This complaint was withdrawn because the prosecutor had not pursued Matt. 18th. He still wished for satisfaction, upon the subject matter of his grievance, as did also the Pastor, who supposed the minds of members might be "*laboring*" under the same "*difficulties*."

Now why did not the Pastor and Mr. Carleton Dole come forward and claim, as in the case of Mrs. Weston, that the offence of Mrs. Fuller was "*public*" and that therefore they were not bound to follow Matt. 18th? No one will pretend that there was any substantial difference between the two cases. Each was charged with certain conduct and speech. The remarks, complained of in both cases, were, according to Dea. T.'s note, made at the "*same interview*." The conduct also in both cases was equally aggravated, one permitting the "*Winter circle*" to dance, while the other by her musical talents, was the principal *moving* cause of the wickedness. If therefore one was guilty of a "*public offence*," so was the other. Why then, in their agony to get at this unoffending woman, did they not accomplish their object under this plea? Was it not because they were heartily ashamed of that most miserable pretence, brought for-

ward in their extremity, when the secret and select caucus was exposed, on the principle of the old adage that "a poor excuse was better than none"?

That caucus was called to take into consideration, (so Dea. Means testified) "what should be done with Judge Weston's family"—of which Mrs. Fuller was a part. Now they did not pretend to justify this meeting except on the ground that the offences which it was called to consider were "*public*," (though even "public offences" do not justify secret meetings of a *part* of the brethren.) Admitting then, as they did, that the charge against Mrs. F. was not of a "public" nature, (nay, by the dismissal and recommendation they show that, *in their consciences*, they regarded her as guiltless of any offence) this caucus was entirely unjustified, by their own admission, so far as *she* was concerned; and stood forth, as unsupported by ecclesiastical usage in its inception, as it was in its subsequent concealment, contrary to every principle of common honesty. No wonder that President Edwards declared—"I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land."*

Judge Redington considered that the church had gone beyond their just powers by legislating as they had, upon the subject of dancing. He had not been present when the report upon that subject was presented, nor at any of the subsequent discussions thereon. He had also not attended any of the sessions during the trial of Mrs. W. until recently. He saw, however, the slough in which the church was floundering, and, as a friend of both parties, who had hitherto kept aloof, came forward at this crisis, with a compromise, between the church and Judge W. and his wife, that he had carefully prepared, and which he earnestly urged the church to adopt. He had shown it to Judge W. and his wife, who readily assented to it, and it only needed the concurrence of the church to bring about an amicable separ-

* Sparks' American Biography.

ation from their ancient friends. After the case of Mrs. Fuller was over, he presented his compromise and explained its nature, and Wednesday evening next was assigned for its consideration. It will be found in our next chapter.

Adjourned.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I am for peace: but, when I speak, they are for war." Ps. cxx, 7.

"They shut up EAR-GATE, they barricaded it up, they kept it locked and bolted, they set a guard thereat." *Bunyan's Holy War*.

Wednesday evening, August 5th.

The PASTOR read Judge Redington's proposition, of which the following are the outlines.

It commenced with a preamble, setting out that a complaint had been made and was then pending against Mrs. Weston, Mrs. Fuller and D. C. Weston;—that since the filing of said complaint, Judge and Mrs. Weston had caused to be placed upon the records, a paper by which they claimed to have withdrawn from the church, and had not since attended with them the ordinances of the gospel;—that there was no hope of their being reconciled to the church;—and that in a case of secession of this kind, ecclesiastical usage authorized the church to declare itself discharged of all farther oversight over the persons seceding. Therefore

Resolved, That in coincidence with their wishes, this church declares itself discharged of all supervision and oversight of Hon. Nathan Weston, and his wife Mrs. Paulina B. Weston.

The proposition concluded with another Resolve,

recommending these persons to the great Head of the church.*

J. L. CHILD. Is there any propriety in introducing the names of D. C. Weston and Mrs Fuller?

JUDGE REDINGTON'S REMARKS.

JUDGE R. then rose and said, that in reply to the inquiry of Mr. C. he would remark, that the reason of introducing those names was that the proceedings of this meeting might be connected with the complaint, which was *one*, and embraced all the names.

The church had not made much progress in the case before them. There seemed to be presented two essential points. The first was, that Judge W. and his wife had deliberately declared their connection with this church dissolved;

The second—that they had abstained from attending with them, the ordinances of the gospel. They had undertaken to secede from the church, and there was no hope of their returning. Why then should they discuss minor points as to the “spirits” of people, while the fact was before them that they had *withdrawn* from the society? He had looked into the subject. The “Saybrook platform” recognized the principle that when a member of a church withdrew from its communion, and there was no hope of regaining him, it was proper to declare that the oversight of the church over that individual was at an end. He would pass then, over everything to the secession. They thought that step perfectly justifiable, and there was no hope of their returning. Let the church then discharge itself of any farther oversight of them. The proposition that he offered, he offered as a compromise. Judge W. and Mrs. W. had read it and concurred in it.

It was a point, in which they should all agree, that this controversy ought to be closed. It was unprofitable.

* The original paper has been mislaid, but the proposition is given substantially.

ble. This measure, if adopted, would close it as to two. The complaint against one had been dropped, and he should be glad if it could be closed as to all. He repeated that he presented this as a compromise, a mere compromise. He felt disposed to encourage religious freedom, and could see no good that would result from the continuance of the relationship. They would all agree that the further holding of these persons, could not possibly benefit *them*. That family felt aggrieved, and wronged. In their inmost consciences, they believed themselves unjustly assailed and oppressed. They believed that the church had acted without authority—that they had come down upon that household without cause—that the church had introduced a new article into the creed, that was intended to operate upon the oldest members—that was intended to bear upon that family. These feelings could never be removed, and hence no benefit could result from a continuance of their connection with this church. They felt cut to the quick, and there could be no *spiritual* relationship, even if it continued in name.

How far it was proper to advert to public sentiment, he did not know. The position of the church, however, was well understood. Would the cause of religion be benefited by keeping up the excitement? If not it was their duty to end it, and from the fulfilment of duty, good would of course result.

He had come to the conclusion that no benefit, in any point of view, could result from holding on to those persons, for the great object of keeping them there had ceased to exist. Would not this severance place them where they would be spiritually improved? And should not people be let off when they could derive no benefit from the connection?

A good deal was said in the Bible about *putting away* &c., but those expressions did not seem to apply to this case. It seemed to him a little singular that they should *put away* persons *who had already gone*. This rather applied to those who wished to remain.

Was the complainant injured by the course proposed ? He did not know but there was some force in that; but then the complainant was not acting for his own benefit. Would he object on account of a stain upon his character ? It could have no unfavorable bearing upon him, for the church would not decide, by this, that the complaint was unfounded. This measure rode over the complaint. And after the complainant was satisfied that it could do no good to the accused, would he insist that the case should be farther pursued ?

Would the church be injured in reputation ? The church had expressed no opinion; and here, when the difficulty could not be settled, and the parties said, let us bury the hatchet, he did not see how this course could injure them.

Was the church desirous of victory ? What ! The church of Him who inculcated humility, who has commanded us to become as little children ! Does it require victory ? A crown of laurels ? He was gratified at the exhibition of penitence at the last meeting. Happy would it be if that was but the commencement of a series of such emotions in us all. Did the church wish their records to show that they had been injured, and that they had had revenge ? When their heads were under the sod, did they wish their children to read that such and such persons treated them wrongfully, and had to *smart* for it ? Would it not be better to see more of the feeling of last evening ? When he had felt no bitterness towards any one, he experienced an elevation of character. At that time he did not know of an individual against whom he cherished a single feeling of unkindness. Can I, said he, not forgive an injury, before I have had acknowledgments ? I have not so understood the injunctions of Christ, and am not prepared to throw away my former opinion. Suppose these persons have injured us, must we have them before us as suppliants ? Cannot we forgive till then ? I am not yet prepared to receive this doctrine. I hold that forgiveness may be granted by one person to another before the

offending party is conscious of error. Then suppose the church is wronged, can it not forgive like an individual, long before that individual has repented? If the church *can* forgive, *ought* it not to do so. What is more satisfactory, more elevating, than the exercise of these feelings! The individuals concerned do not think they are wrong, and if they are, let the mantle of charity be thrown over them: but do not let a self-denying, cross bearing people contend for *victory*! These persons do not think they are guilty, and never will; and if we expect acknowledgments from them, we shall have to wait till our children, and our children's children, are under the sod.

But it is said the church have been treated thus and so, and some severe sentence must be passed. Members think Judge W. used harsh and severe language. He thinks it was a matter of duty to protect his family. When lighter words would not do, he felt himself justified in using those that were more scorching, in making use of sarcasm, to repel aggression. He considers that the cause of Christ demanded it—that any other course would have been inconsistent with that manly independence, that it was his duty to assert. I did think that more severity was used than was proper, and have told him so. He denied it, and thinks differently. Let others go and do likewise. I had no unkind feelings about it, but went to him as became my own character.

The church had the power to proceed to excision, but, he insisted, they were not obliged to do so. He should like it if these individuals could go without a single word of censure. He was distrustful whether it could be done, but it would give him pleasure to say that the twenty or thirty years connection should be pleasantly, and harmoniously dissolved. Such was the desire of these persons.

The church had declared their secession improper.

They planted themselves behind the oppression of the church. They declared that it was a necessary, essential, inherent right to withdraw under the circumstances

in which they were placed. This was the view taken by Judge W. He expressed no opinion. The church had stated their opinions. Judge W. had given his. If he thought he was wronged, he had a right to say it. Let him say it. He would say it, because he believed it.

Let the church, then, not expel, not excind, but simply cease to supervise them. If they could separate without giving any reasons, he should be glad. He did not want to see *any* censure upon their records, but perhaps that could not be. There might have been more; embodied in the document that he presented, but there was no necessity for anything more. It was idle to split hairs about the offence—to separate between the joints and the marrow, when the great fact was before them that these persons had gone, and were, in a certain sense, as far off as across the Atlantic, moving in other climes.

DR. SNELL. One objection to Judge Redington's proposition is, that it establishes a *precedent*. If I know my own feelings, I do not want "*victory*." Here there was grief. Dr. T. went alone, and with brother Kilburn, to visit the offending party. More light was required, after her communication was read, and was not given: and can the case be smothered in this way? Suppose a case. When I commit sin, to avoid censure I leave the church; and plead this as a precedent. If you do thus with great men, you must with little men.

Besides there is a contradiction between Dr. T. and, I will not say Mrs. W. but Judge W.

JUDGE R. insisted that the course he proposed was in accordance with authority. It was a measure about which there would be various ways of speaking, according to the temperaments of people. Some might perhaps say that the church had "*backed out*"—others that so high handed an offence had been committed, that the church could not have these people with them. That as to that little matter of the complaint, it was of small consequence in view of the great act of secession.

He said the church was not a party to the complaint, though he perceived that was the way of speaking.

It was said, there was a question of "veracity." How was it to be settled? Was there any more testimony? It was a misapprehension. He did not think the point was distinctly presented to Mrs. W. The complainant did not understand it so well then as now. After three months reflection people could express themselves better.*

DR. SNELL said he did not intend to argue it.

C. DOLE. Last Friday evening, a new field of vision was opened upon my mind. I saw that it was a misapprehension.† A person may fail to present a view, clear in his own mind, clearly to another, and I verily believe that the difficulty existed in misapprehension. I do not believe that either veered from strict verity. I feel bound to say there was honesty of view on both sides, and if brother Tappan did not present the case fully to Mrs. W. it failed. As yet I have expressed no opinion in the case.

The PASTOR inquired of Judge R. if he had his authorities present.

JUDGE R. replied that he had not. He then went on to say that he had offered, what he had, as a compromise, and did not wish it viewed in any other light.

DEA. MEANS felt that he must make a remark or two. Either Judge R. or himself misapprehended the case. Very possibly he did. They had duties to perform. He could say with brother Snell, that he did not want "victory." Brother Redington had said that Judge W. would never change his mind, but he was not aware that any measures had been taken by the church to convince

* Judge R. had been present but too or three evenings, and knew nothing of the testimony, that was introduced *prior to the "withdrawal,"* and he therefore thought it probable there was a "misapprehension" between Dea. T. and Mrs. W. He cannot *now* believe there was. See note (page 162) He had been assured by the church leaders that there had been no attempt to interfere with dancing, and, not having been present at the meetings, was temporarily deceived.

† See page 145, where he says he sees by Mrs. W.'s *answer* and the *withdrawal* that Judge W. and wife considered it was the *act* complained of. And now he says this new field of vision burst upon him last Friday night!!

him, and until such measures were taken how did they know but that he could be convinced? And then as to the instrument, I believe it is worded that we *coincide* with Judge W.

JUDGE R. No measures taken to convince Judge W.! A vote was passed in his presence declaring his secession improper. He then went on to say that he did not know of any steps that would be likely to have that effect. As to the "coincidence." He had been at some pains to find a suitable word. It did not necessarily mean that the vote of severance was passed *because* Judge W. and his wife wished it, but might mean that this vote *happened* to be in accordance with their views.

E. CRAIG. This principle of forgiveness, advanced by brother Redington, seems to me to be out of place here.

D. WILLIAMS spoke in favor of Judge R.'s proposition, and then alluded to the complaint, and concluded by saying that Mrs. W.'s answer to the complaint was sufficient. It had been said that this was neutralized. There might be something of that kind, but he had not been able to see it.

C. DOLE. That spirit which has been spoken of by brother Redington is, I suppose, superlatively excellent. The difficulties with which we have been embarrassed, have arisen from misapprehension, and it would have been better for the complainant to have stopped when Mrs. W.'s first paper was read.* I have no doubt of the purity of intention, and clearness of mind, of the complaining brother, but the difficulty is, was the matter properly presented to Mrs. W.? The great difficulty, however, in my mind is *subsequent events*. I admit of the extenuation of what Judge R. has said, but it is not a *full* excuse; and the difficulty is *subsequent events*. He then went on to say that if this was presented as a compromise, he could freely say that he wished for nothing

* This Mr. Dole is the man who would not let Dea. T. stop. And when a motion was made that the complaint had not been sustained, this is the man who moved to lay that motion on the table—(see page 110.)

D. WILLIAMS said that Judge R.'s proposition was presented at the last meeting. If there was a disposition to look at this case as it was, there would be seen to be enough to settle it, on the ground of compromise. It ought to give them joy to acquit, but this did not go so far as that. There had been discussion enough for the three last months, during the whole of which the church had been in trouble. Judge R., Mr. Dole and the Pastor had said there was nothing in the books against this; why then could they not meet the question?

C. DOLE after remarking upon the proposition, threw out some doubts as to whether this proposition was sufficiently full—whether it ought not to contain some more suggestions.

J. H. HARTWELL asked Judge R. if he should withdraw his proposition if it was not then accepted.

JUDGE R. replied that he should.

DR. SNELL said he should not stand in the way, but if this was adopted, the form of admission must be different. When members joined, *they vowed unto God and could not go back*. He was not prepared to vote, and wanted to converse with some of the brethren. Here was a complaint against brother Daniel Weston, and he might slip through in the same way. They could'nt make flesh of one, and fish of another.

Here was a motion to adjourn.

J. H. HARTWELL spoke in favor of the compromise, and alluded to the fact that it was to be withdrawn if not accepted.

JUDGE R. said the motion to adjourn had precedence.

J. L. CHILD said that a motion to adjourn was not in order till Judge R.'s proposition had been accepted, rejected, or laid upon the table.

J. HOOPER did not want to stand in the way, but he was not ready to act. This was an important case that affected the whole country round.

Three months was'nt long. They had a case in Winthrop that lasted 'em two years. These cases required great caution, and members ought not to come to a con-

clusion too soon. It struck his mind, that they might come to a harmonious conclusion on another evening, so that they might dwell in peace. He hoped Judge R. would be willing to let them have another day to look at the thing.

J. H. HARTWELL said that there might be some that would not understand it then.

DEA, MEANS labored under some very serious difficulties. There were known to him but two ways of leaving a church; one was by dismissal and recommendation to another church,—another was by excommunication. Was there a third? Or was this an excommunication?

JUDGE R. replied that they could call it what they pleased. The result was that the tie was severed. The more things that had happened which seemed to demand excision, in that proportion it would be suitable to call this one.

PASTOR. It seems that two constructions may be put upon it. Some may call it a "*backing out*" from the original complaint, and others a separating for a greater offence. Will it not be better to adopt such a course that there can be but *one* way of speaking of it?*

J. H. HARTWELL said that he saw this was not to be allowed to pass.

On motion, Mr. Dole and Judge R. were appointed to take the subject into consideration, and report on Friday evening next.

Adjourned to that time.

* Mr. T. wished to have these persons excommunicated so that he could have the pleasure of announcing the fact in the Christian Mirror. The pertinacity of the man almost amounts to a disease. When conversing with an individual on what would be satisfactory on the part of Mrs. W., he said that IF SHE WOULD MAKE PUBLIC CONFESSION EITHER IN THE MEETING-HOUSE, OR IN THE VESTRY, PERHAPS THE CHURCH MIGHT BE SATISFIED.

Friday evening, August 7th.

The committee reported. It seemed they had taken Judge R.'s compromise, and razed it into the "mildest form of excision." The concluding resolution, recommending Judge W. and wife to the "great Head of the church," was struck out,—the "coincidence" clause dropped, and some other changes made.

The report having been read,

Dr. SNELL inquired if it was an excommunication?

JUDGE R. I consider it a separation, an excision, an excommunication. The results are all the same. It cuts forever the tie, but there is a difference in the bitterness with which it is done. It is the mildest possible form of doing the same substantial thing.

D. WILLIAMS said, if it could be called an excommunication, he would not go for it. He would not go for it, till there was no other alternative left.

JUDGE R. said that he had offered a compromise, and it was objected to, because it was a compromise. Now a paper was offered, that was not of that character, and it was objected to. Judge W. was willing that this should be passed.

J. H. HARTWELL objected, that it was not right to excommunicate without deciding Mrs. W.'s case.

After considerable farther discussion, D. Williams was, on motion, associated with Judge R. and Mr. Dole, and they were constituted a committee to call upon Judge W. and his wife, talk over the subject, and see if they could not be persuaded to take back their withdrawal, and submit to the jurisdiction of the church;* and if not to report some proposition.

Adjourned to Monday evening, August 10th.

* When Judge R. inquired of Mr. Tappan what would be the duty of the committee, he was told that they were to ask Judge W. why he had used such severe language in the vestry, and Mrs. W., why she would not answer, &c. Perhaps the Pastor has the power *ex-officio*, to assign duties to committees. No such duties were specified by the church.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Then said the man, Neighbors, wherefore are you come? They said, To persuade you to go back with us; but he said, That can by no means be: you dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born; I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone: be content good neighbors, and go along with me." *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Monday evening, August 10th.

The committee appointed at the last meeting, having attended to the duties assigned them, presented, and recommended the church to adopt the following,

REPORT.

"Whereas—1st. A controversy is now pending before the church in the matter of Mrs. Paulina B. Weston, as will more fully appear by the files and records of the church.

2d. Since the complaint in that case was filed, Judge Weston and his wife, Mrs. Paulina B. Weston, both being members of this church, caused a document, by them signed, to be read to the church and placed upon its files, purporting in substance that they withdraw themselves from all further connection with this church. *The church deem that act irregular and invalid.* It is contended and believed by Judge Weston and wife, however, that their act of withdrawal aforesaid was justified on the ground, as they say, that the church first broke their covenant with them by assuming jurisdiction of matters not within their appropriate sphere, and by passing the vote they did relative to persons, abstaining from the communion.

3d. Since the filing of that complaint, neither Judge Weston nor Mrs. Weston has attended public or other social worship with this church, but have withdrawn from this church, and attended worship with another denomination of christians, though it was equally convenient for them to have attended with us, as with them.

4th. Since the filing of that complaint, Judge Weston and Mrs. Weston have associated with, and been confirmed in the Episcopalian church.

5th. The views of Judge Weston and Mrs. Weston are ascertained to be such as *preclude all hope of their reconciliation and restoration to the fellowship of this church.*

6th. Judge Weston and wife truly consider the views entertained by them, as mentioned under our 2d head, and other circumstances, as constituting *a full justification of their courses.* Those views and circumstances are worthy of much consideration, as they exhibit palliations of no small weight. The church, however, is *constrained to decide, that they do not present an entire justification of their courses.*

7th. It is believed to be a principle, recognized by Congregational churches, and in accordance with the Divine economy, relative to their rights and duties, that when members have voluntarily and unnecessarily withdrawn from the fellowship of a church, and cannot be regained and restored, the church may *rightfully esteem and declare itself discharged of any farther oversight or relationship toward them.*

Therefore.—Resolved, That the oversight and relationship of this church toward Hon. Nathan Weston and Mrs. Paulina B. Weston now cease.”*

C. DOLE stated that this was a separation under the mildest form of excision, and read some authorities to show that it was in accordance with usage.

JUDGE R. said the committee were received courteously, and cordially, and that they had attended to their duties thoroughly, going over the whole ground of the difficulties.

J. H. HARTWELL inquired if the committee were harmonious.

JUDGE R. replied that they were—and went on to add that Mrs. W. had said that she never intended to injure the feelings of the church, and that no complaint was

* The words in italics are thus marked in the original paper. As to the 4th specification. It was said that Mr. T. and some members of his church, considered the confirmation of their members not regularly dismissed and recommended by them, a usurpation on the part of the Episcopal church. After some reflection, they seem to have hit upon the expedient of dismissing, without recommending, members wishing to join St. Mark's, as the various forms of dismissal *subsequently* given will show. This was understood to be, either by way of reprisal, or to put a stop to migration, or because they considered a recommendation from them without value. We do not think that the Bishop of the Eastern Diocese or the Episcopal church should be adjudged “not entitled to christian courtesy” without a bearing.

made by Dr. Tappan in his visits, about the invitation or the spirit, separate from the act.

D. WILLIAMS said that the committee were constrained to believe that the mitigating circumstances, attending the withdrawal of Judge W. and his wife, were nearly enough to excuse them; though they did not make out an entire justification.

J. H. HARTWELL. Though the report is not satisfactory to me, yet as the committee are unanimous, *I move that it be accepted.*

T. LITTLE. With the explanations given, *I second the motion.*

PASTOR. If there is any dissatisfaction with the report, it had better be expressed, so that the committee may remove it.

D. WILLIAMS called for the reading of the report so that all might understand it.

Here the report was read by the Pastor.

DEA. T. I wish to make a remark or two. The complaint was made by me. I thought there was cause of grief, and knew that others were grieved; and when I told it to the church, I thought I had presented to Mrs. W. the cause of grievance. I think so still. I did not see, nor do I now see, how you can separate what was said and done from the *quo animo*. He then illustrated. He supposed a particular sort of fruit was offensive to him, and to other members of the church, and a member who knew that fact should have a party and offer the fruit. Would not that be a breach of christian fellowship? Now, said he, is not that case parallel with the present? Were not the church opposed to this amusement?—and was not here a party?—and did not the amusement take place? I go and express my grief; and what is the answer? Why she says I did not do it to grieve you, and if I have done so, I am sorry for it, but you have no right to be grieved, and when the church expressed the opinions they did, against dancing, they acted out of their province. I reply that we have not

acted out of our province and she insists that we did. What kind of satisfaction is this?*

C. DOLE. The great difficulty is whether Dr. T. conveyed his meaning.† No doubt he thinks he did. As to the question of veracity, there is no necessity of supposing any want of truth on either side. Every thing is explainable in a manner consistent with the entire sincerity of both. I may have an idea in my own mind, clear and distinct; and yet not present it fully to another. I am not aware that the committee have touched this subject, but believe they acquit Dr. T. of any bad motives.

PASTOR. I wish to read a single passage from Mrs. W.'s first statement, to show that she *did* apprehend that it was her spirit that was the cause of grief. He then read the following sentence (see page 69). "The subscriber told him she did not invite them for the purpose of dancing, nor to show the majority of the church, that she disregarded their feelings."‡

C. DOLE remarked that that did not remove the difficulty.

D. C. WESTON (here addressed the Pastor.) If you had finished the sentence you quoted, perhaps it would

* Mark the illustration and this whole statement of the Deacon, and see how perfectly it coincides with the statements of Mrs. W., and how utterly inconsistent it is with the story that *nothing was further from this man's heart "than to interfere with the amusements in Judge Weston's family."* (See page 144.)

† How was it possible for Mr. Dole to say this immediately after the remarks of Dea. T. ?

‡ Dea. T., in the course of his long conversations with Mrs. W., maintained that no church member could allow dancing after the acceptance of the report on that subject. To allow dancing, he declared, was to set up her views as more to be relied upon, than those of the great majority of the church, and was showing a disregard of their sentiments;—and that they could not permit it. She then used the language which Mr. T. quoted; but that made not the slightest difference with Dea. T., inasmuch as his only object was, to make her say *she was sorry for what she had done; and that she would not do so again.* It was astonishing after all that had passed, and after the Pastor had read such a strong paper against dancing, (page 89) that he should persist that there was any other issue than *whether Mrs. W. should be permitted to allow dancing or not.*

have been as well. But if it was true that Dea. T.'s whole cause of grief consisted in the idea that Mrs. W., intended to injure the feelings of the church, why was not her disclaimer of any such intention sufficient—admitting as he did that she spoke with entire sincerity?

PASTOR. Those in favor of the report of the committee please to manifest it—it is a vote.

JUDGE R. then moved the following:

“Resolved, that in thus parting with these ancient members of the church, we affectionately commend them to the protection and guidance of our God, praying, that by the trainings of His providence and the influences of His spirit, they may be ripened for a peaceful immortality.”

D. WILLIAMS seconded the motion—which was put and carried.

Adjourned.

The end was not yet.

. CHAPTER XVIII.

“Then said Mr. Godly-fear as follows: “Sir, if you were not destitute of an honest heart, you could not do as you have done and do.”

Bunyan's Holy War.

Had Mr. Tappan allowed this unpleasant controversy to have dropped here, the reader would, perhaps, have been spared the pain which this disclosure must have occasioned: and the reporter saved the labor of the publication. There are points beyond which endurance ceases to be a virtue.

In the number of “the Christian Mirror” (published at Portland) issued Oct. 22, 1840, is a “report of the state of the churches, connected with the Kennebec Conference, presented at its annual meeting, Sept. 30, 1840,” from which the following is extracted.

"To the church in South Augusta, 13 have been added by profession, and 7 by letter; 8 have been dismissed, and two excluded." * * * * "For several months the attention of the church has been occupied with cases of discipline. Hereby much feeling has been excited in the community; a few families have left the society, and the church has been, in various ways, severely tried. The prospect now is, that all the cases of discipline, just referred to, will soon be disposed of, and we are not without the hope, that the whole affair, painful as it has been, will be made subservient to our greater good. The most discouraging circumstance is the want of faith, and spirituality and prayerfulness among ourselves. We have felt, and we still feel, that we have special claim upon the sympathies and prayers of sister churches."

It further appeared from this "report," that five had been "excommunicated" from the other churches belonging to this "Conference"; and in the recapitulation, these are added to the two "excluded" from "the church in South Augusta," making seven in all.

When this "report" came to the knowledge of Judge Weston, the following correspondence took place.

JUDGE W.'s NOTE TO THE PASTOR.

"Judge Weston asks the favor of Mr. Tappan to be informed, if he is the author of a paragraph, which appeared in the Christian Mirror of the 22nd instant, in relation the South Parish Church in Augusta, and if so, who are the two individuals, there stated to have been "excluded" from that church.

October 27, 1840."

THE PASTOR'S REPLY.

"In reply to Judge Weston's inquiry, Mr. Tappan would inform him, that *he did* furnish the account referred to, of the South Parish Church in Augusta, and that the two individuals intended were Judge Weston and wife.

October 27, 1840."

CHAPTER XIX.

"And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him."

Acts xii: 22, 23, 24.

CASE OF D. C. WESTON.

The reporter was, by this time, tired of noting upon paper the performances of the church, and abandoned his previous system of accurately taking down everything that was said and done. A few things however were reduced to writing and preserved.

The church had several adjournments, but a few strokes of the pen only, are needed to show the occurrences apart from the documents, which of themselves sufficiently explain the nature of the case.

Mr. Weston in the first place asked a dismissal and recommendation to St. Marks, and requested a speedy investigation of his case with a view to that object.

[For the complaint see page 39.]

At the commencement of the case, Dea. Tappan was asked by Mr. W. if in their interview the latter did not disclaim all intention of wounding his feelings, and express regret that anything he had said or done had produced that effect. This was admitted by Dea. T. in its fullest extent, but he insisted that it was not sufficient satisfaction. He thought he had a right to demand (and in this he was joined by the Pastor) that Mr. W. should admit that he had done wrong. Certain things they declared were charged in the complaint as true; and if so, Mr. W. should not only express regret that he had wounded the feelings of a brother, but acknowledge the

wrong. Mr. W. insisted that he could not acknowledge himself to blame, when he did not consider himself so, and that they had no right to ask it; that he had said to Dea. T. all that was required by christian fellowship. He said that no other brother had expressed to him any dissatisfaction with his course. If any one was dissatisfied, if he would only come to him, he would cheerfully and sincerely say the same that he had said to Dea. T.

This however, was not satisfactory, and CARLETON DOLE and JUDGE REDINGTON were appointed a committee to meet Dea. T. and the accused, and make report upon the case to the church.

The parties afterwards met the committee, the causes of grievance were specified, and Mr. W. gave a history of the facts relating to each. No one disputed these facts, neither was Mr. W. called upon to produce proof other than his own statements.

Before the committee reported, DR. SNELL for some reason was added to it, but Mr. W. was not cited again.*

In due time the following report, which was understood to have been drawn up by Mr. DOLE, was presented and accepted.

REPORT.

"The attention of the committee has been drawn to the following particulars:

1st. That Mr. Weston charged the Pastor with having attempted, from the pulpit, to forestall the opinion of the church, as to the subject *matter then under discussion*.

The committee consider *that subject matter* as clearly within the range of pastoral duty;—and, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, they presume that whatever was presented from the sacred desk, was the result of the Pastor's convictions of duty, and that he was not influenced by unsuitable motives. *At the church meeting held next after that in which the charge was made, Mr. Weston did, and now does, assert that in making it, he was not actuated by any want of respect toward the Pastor, and that he THEN did consider the Pastor's error to be an error of*

* This gave the caucus a majority of the committee.

the judgment, and not of the heart, and that it did in fact produce the effect of forestalling opinion.

2d. That Mr. Weston charged the Pastor with having imputed dishonest views to a minority of the church, when discussing the report of a committee on the subject of dancing, and declared himself indignant at that imputation. The committee do not find it proved that the Pastor made that imputation—Mr. Weston admits that he made that charge, and now considers that the Pastor did, at least indirectly, make that imputation—on which occasion he expressed himself strongly, and declared himself indignant.*

3d. That Mr. Weston alleged that the church was governed by a few—and tolerated outrageous crime, by admitting to its communion one who had committed such a crime.

Mr. Weston admitted the making of said charges—and that as to the latter charge he referred mainly to a minister of the gospel, who, as Mr. Weston says, had just before that time published a libel. It does not however, appear that the church had been apprized of objections existing against the character of any person with whom the church had communed on the occasion referred to.

4th. That Mr. Weston had assailed the character of a minister of the gospel in good standing, without having previously taken any measures of private monition *toward* him—Mr. W. admits that he made said charge without having taken previous measures.

5th. That Mr. Weston, during the discussions on the subject of dancing, protested against the right of the church to

* Was it not a little curious that out of 26 male members, present when the report on dancing was accepted, THE PASTOR'S OWN BROTHER SHOULD BE THE MAN TO CHARGE MR. W. WITH DISRESPECT TO THE PASTOR ON THAT OCCASION? And that the latter should not only preside at a secret caucus, where this complaint for *disrespect to himself*, was concocted, but PRESIDE AND GIVE DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE SAME IN THE VESTRY? The Pastor, in speaking of the caucus, admitted, that in *ordinary cases*, that measure would be prejudicial to the rights of the accused, by creating a feeling that they ought to stand by their agent, but that in CHRISTIAN BODIES any bias of that kind was not supposed to have place! We suppose then, that, though the Pastor's *presiding in his own case*, might *seem* improper to a man of the world, yet when it is considered that "*ordinary*" considerations have no place in the breast of the "*christian*," the impropriety disappears!

pass obligatory votes on that subject, and declared that he would not feel himself bound by them.

Mr. Weston admits making those declarations.

6th. That Mr. W. particularly disregarded the feelings of the church as expressed in the report of a committee, which the church had then recently accepted. The complainant admits that previously to filing said complaint, he did not with sufficient tenderness and patience present this subject to the mind of Mr. Weston—that no other brother of the church was called upon and that probably there was misapprehension between the parties—and expresses regret on that account.*

That the requirements of 18 (ch.) Mathew, were, in the main, complied with, was not controverted so far as relates to the first five charges.†

* This charge related to Mr. W.'s *violin playing*; and he accordingly watched Mr. Dole to see what he would do with it, after all his talk about "*spirits*," and his pretences that no attempt had been made to interfere with the ACT. The way he slurs it over is laughable, and shows a *consciousness* of his inability to explain it. "6th, that Mr. W. *particularly* disregarded the feelings of the church"!! He does not say *how*, *where*, or *when*, but drops it as if it were a live coal.

† The reason that this was not "controverted," was that Mr. W. did not wish to avail himself of what might be considered a "plea in abatement." The truth was that the charge about *violin playing*, was the *only one that was clearly presented*. Some general grievance, about the debate on dancing, was stated to Mr. W. by Dea T., without going, scarcely at all, into particulars. As proof of this fact, Mr. W. was obliged to apply to Dea. T. *after the complaint was filed*, to know what language was complained of. Here is his reply. Will it be thought possible that it could have been written in the 19th century?

"Monday morning.

D. C. WESTON, Esq.

SIR :—The expressions which form in part the matter of complaint to the church, were THAT THE PASTOR HAD ATTEMPTED TO FORESTALL THE OPINION OF THE CHURCH. THAT HE HAD IMPUTED TO YOURSELF WANT OF HONEST VIEWS, AT WHICH IMPUTATION YOU EXPRESSED YOURSELF INDIGNANT. THAT THE CHURCH WERE LED BY A FEW, AND WHILE RAISING A HUE AND CRY ABOUT INDIFFERENT OR INNOCENT THINGS, TOLERATED CRIME—for proof of these, or expressions of like meaning, I shall rely upon those who were present.

E. S. TAPPAN."

The complaint was filed on Friday afternoon, and on the forenoon of that day, in a violent rain storm, Dea. T. and Mr. Kilburn came into Mr. W.'s office on their *errand*. They did not remain over five minutes; just

It was several times intimated to Mr. W. that, if conscious of any wrong in the acts complained of, or in any of his feelings connected therewith, it was desirable that such recantation, retraxits, apologies or regrets should be offered or expressed, as he might deem due to the occasion. No views or feelings of that kind, however, were expressed. As a defence to the four charges made by Mr. Weston, and above recited (two against the Pastor, one against the church and against the Rev. Mr. Adams,) Mr. Weston alleges that he then honestly believed that said charges were true, and that he committed no wrong in stating his convictions, and that he now entertains the same views.

He also presents it as a defence, or at least an extenuation, that he was not called to order upon the spot, at the times when he made his remarks.

Respectfully submitted,"

C. DOLE,
Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. W., after examining the report, was not satisfied with it, but called upon Judge R. and expressed the wish that it might be altered in some respects, and made more full in others,—giving him a schedule of the desired changes. Judge R. readily undertook to have it done, and called upon Mr. Dole for that purpose. Mr. D. however, was disinclined to make the alterations, and they were, of course, not made.

At an adjourned meeting

JUDGE R. moved that the sixth reported specification be struck out.

DEA. T. asked why ? Did'nt he fiddle ?*

D. C. W. replied that he *did* fiddle, and that he should probably *fiddle* again, but that when he *fiddled* he did not *fiddle* out of disrespect to the church.

JUDGE R. said that he made this motion, because it appeared that it was not properly before the church, Matt.

long enough for the Matt. 18th pretence. This was all the notice Mr. W. had that a complaint against himself was to be made.

* This was amusing after Mr. D.'s attempt to cover up that charge; and shows that the committee misunderstood the Deacon and reported his admissions under the 6th head too strongly.

18th, not having been pursued. This motion prevailed.

It was ordered that a committee be appointed to converse with Mr. W. upon the subjects of complaint.

D. C. W. objected to having any member of the caucus upon that committee, but it being difficult to raise one from the members present, without going into that body, he did not object to THOMAS LITTLE, Esq. This gentleman and Judge R. were appointed the committee.

Mr. Weston, after hearing the suggestions of these gentlemen, determined, at the suggestion of one of them, to put what he had to say by way of acknowledgment or defence upon paper.

At an adjourned meeting of the church

JUDGE R. moved, that the 5th reported specification be struck out.

This motion was seconded, and rather a curious discussion arose. D. Williams and Judge R. taking part in its favor, and Dea. Means and Jacob Hooper speaking against it.

JUDGE R. maintained that resolutions upon the subject of dancing were not *rightfully upon the church records*, and that Mr. W. did right to protest against them. But if the church had the right to pass obligatory votes, and Mr. W. thought otherwise, he was justified in protesting. He could not see how anything morally wrong could be charged upon Mr. W. from this circumstance.*

J. HOOPER said if the church could not control its members—could not pass votes practically binding—he should wish his name off from its roll. He should not wish to belong to such a society.

D. WILLIAMS inquired if Mr. H. knew of any Congregational churches that exercised this power?

J. HOOPER specified one or two in Massachusetts that would not allow their members to have anything to do with dancing.

The result of this discussion was that Judge R. did

* Did the South Parish Church ever look into the derivation of the term PROTESTANT?

not succeed in getting his motion through, but it was laid on the table, and never afterwards called up.

Mr. W. then read the following paper.

D. C. WESTON'S ANSWER TO THE COMPLAINT.

"Before entering directly upon my case I have a few preliminary observations.

1st. I am deeply and painfully impressed with the belief that my chance of justice is slight; because the whole case has been *prejudged* by those whose instrument Deacon Tappan was. The reason of the palpable concert between this gentleman and a portion of the church, has been fully developed, and that which was performed in secret, been proclaimed upon the housetops. The aspect of affairs has been entirely changed. It is no longer Deacon Tappan who is the complainant, but the caucus which employed him and sent him forth. (I use the term *caucus*, not as a term of reproach, but because in my opinion it best expresses the character of that meeting.) In all fairness and honesty then, this caucus should be placed upon one side and myself upon the other,—and the church should decide between us.

I am informed by a distinguished congregational clergyman, that this combination is without a parallel in church history. It was not a meeting of the church, but of a *party* in the church. The notice was private, and the meeting itself kept a profound secret for more than three months; and would have remained so still but for the merest accident. If this was right why was it not as open as the day? Why this getting together under the cover of the night? Why this profound and premeditated silence? [Here Mr. W. was interrupted by J. Hooper and Dea. Means. The latter declared that it was *unknown to him* that persons against whom charges were made, should themselves make charges. Judge Redington and D. Williams contended that Mr. W. had a right to proceed. Mr. W. said that if the church would undertake to try him and deny him the right to defend himself, they would have the honor of being the only tribunal in the civilized world that denied that privilege. Leave being granted, the accused proceeded.] Any palliation of its *secrecy* has not yet been attempted: but the Pastor has stated in justification of the meeting that it was very natural and proper for those who felt aggrieved to get together and talk the subject over.* Now it is a remarkable fact

* See top of page 149.

—and one which I stand ready to prove—that people were summoned to this meeting, and went to the place appointed, *without knowing the object for which it was called*. This I trust will put forever at rest the assertion that this was a *spontaneous* meeting of such as felt aggrieved!

Who called this meeting? And *why* was it called? The first question I shall answer hereafter. As to the second, I shall here give my opinion—to wit—that the *real* though *undisclosed* object of that meeting was, to get a sufficient number of the church pledged to sustain the meditated prosecutions—to get them *committed*. It was, undoubtedly, considered too bold a step to venture upon, without counting and making sure of the force which was to support it. I wish the church to notice that I am merely giving my opinion, in all honor and honesty. If that opinion is erroneous, I ask the forgiveness of God and of those who are aggrieved thereby. It becomes me in this communication to state my thoughts freely, fearing nothing but God and my own conscience. How can you judge of my motives and conduct if any other course is adopted? But to return to the subject. Deacon Tappan is the agent of that caucus. He is under their direction, and is carrying out their views; and it strikes me as improper that they should sit as judges, in their own cause. I may be wrong in this; but it is an old maxim, and one that is practiced upon in every tribunal that makes the most distant approaches to justice or equity. It is considered (such is the imperfection of our natures) that no man is a suitable judge of the merits of his own case. Perhaps however, in churches the necessity of the maxim is not perceived.*

2nd. The majority of the male members of this church think it improper for any christian to *dance*, at any time or place. Mr. Dole thinks so. Mr. Tappan and his brother think so. Mr. Hooper and Deacon Means are of that opinion. Not only so, they have attempted to put a stop even to the dancing of children. Mr. Dole, Mr. Hooper and Deacon Means would not allow their children to attend a society (to which they belonged) at my father's house—because they heard that there was to be dancing. It has been a darling project with these individuals, and of the Pastor, and of others, to put down dancing entirely; and they have pursued it with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. This movement I have conscientiously resisted to the utmost of my power; and it is an offence which cannot easily be forgiven. I am a young man; and they think

* See note, page 195.

the tone I have assumed was not suited to my age—that I had no right to set myself in opposition to older and better men. They may disclaim prejudice and deceive themselves into the idea that they are above its reach: but while they remain men and subject to human infirmities and passions, any impartial man will perceive that I have much of it to contend with.

3d. Mr. Dole, whom I have met in an antagonist attitude from first to last—who drafted the report which created the trouble; and the fallacy of which I attempted to expose both in the vestry, and before the public—who is identified with this movement from the beginning—HE is placed upon the committee to settle the facts in this case. After having been opposed and thwarted by me—and we maintaining towards each other the relation of author and reviewer, HE is to be the man of all others, who is to fix the facts upon which I am to be acquitted or condemned? Judge Redington was not present at the debates, and of course could say nothing. Was not then this appointment of Mr. Dole an indelicacy on the part of the church, and a still greater on the part of him who accepted the office? It strikes me so, and every one with whom I have conversed, and will continue to do so, till it is demonstrated that Mr. Dole is above the imperfections to which other men are subject.

4th. Was not this prosecution the result of private pique?—not on the part of the caucus generally, but on the part of those who called it? Nothing is easier than for those who act from a certain motive, to state some other of less prominence. They are sometimes even unaware themselves of the true springs of action which are at work in the recesses of their hearts.

It is a most remarkable coincidence, that this meeting did not take place till AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF MY "VINDICATION"—AN EVENT WHICH HAPPENED ABOUT FIVE WEEKS AFTER THE ALLEGED CAUSE OF GRIEVANCE OCCURRED. Why slept the censures of the church during this long period? If my deportment during that debate was as outrageous as is pretended, why was not a meeting *immediately* called, while the offence was yet fresh and reeking in the minds of members, to consult on the measures necessary in so urgent a case? Is it in accordance with human experience that an offence should grow more enormous with the lapse of time?

Am I not right then in supposing that the Vindication was the grand moving cause of this unheard of proceeding. Every man to whom I have stated the fact that five weeks inter-

vened between this debate and the publication of the *Vindication*; and that during that whole period no complaint was made of anything which occurred during that debate—and that *immediately* on the appearance of that pamphlet, this caucus was called—is forced to admit there must have been a connection between those two events.

Those who called that meeting, and not those who assembled in obedience to that call, are responsible for this coincidence. Who were they?

Mr. Dole is a leader in this church. He is looked up to by others; and nothing of importance takes place without his advice and consent. He, it is, who, in connection with the Pastor, takes the lead, and gives direction to affairs. Mr. Dole is an author. After months of reflection and examination, he produces a report—which report is published and circulated. The *Vindication* follows and attempts to expose its fallacy. The public can best judge whether it was calculated to flatter the vanity of an author. And where do we find him?—An important and prominent member of that ecclesiastical caucus. Had the *Vindication* nothing to do with his presence there? Let the good sense of the candid and honest answer.

Again. Our Pastor told me in his study, soon after the complaint was filed, that a *paragraph in the Vindication seemed to him more reprehensible than anything I had uttered in the vestry*. Take this declaration, in connection with the fact that he was at that private meeting—that he opened it, and stated its object to those assembled; and it is to my mind, as well as to that of others, a thread that will guide us safely through the labyrinth. Am I not then justified in the belief, that I am not in *reality* called to the bar of this church for anything uttered by me in debate? Am I not justified in believing that the brethren, assembled on that occasion at Deacon Means' house, *were not put in possession of the true motives of those who called them together?*

If I wrong any one, I am sorry for it; and may God grant me more just views? In this communication it is my duty to speak my thoughts freely.

With these preliminary observations, which I have felt it my duty to make, I come directly upon the charges preferred.

The church have struck out from the complaint the charge, relating to the "practical disregard of the feelings of the church," exhibited (as Deacon Tappan has explained) by my playing on the violin, for certain children to dance, at my father's house, because Matthew 18th had not been pursued by the complain-

ant. The charges are therefore narrowed down to what was uttered in debate before the church.

It will be perceived that I am arraigned for no crime—that I am charged with no unholy manner of living—with nothing mean, vicious, hypocritical or unmanly—not with slandering my neighbors behind their backs, or stabbing at reputations in the dark: but with certain language which fell from me in the ardor of debate, relating to individuals and the church *then assembled before me*.

Now as to everything said in that debate, I have the general answer—that *I was not called to order during any part of it*. Had anything improper been said by me, it was the duty of the Pastor or some member of the church to have called me to order;* and then such explanations could have been given, and such disclaimers put in, as would have been satisfactory to those aggrieved. In all parliamentary bodies, if anything out of order is said, the person offending is called to order *and the exact language taken down*. If this is not done, he cannot afterwards be censured by the body to which he belongs. The propriety of this rule is manifest, when the great difficulty of fixing the exact form of the expressions used, any considerable time after they were uttered, is considered. If a few words and sentences, here and there, in the course of a long speech, are seized upon and brought forward a long time afterward, detached from the connection in which they were used, a garbled statement will be the inevitable consequence. That which came in naturally, and with propriety *at the time*, presented by itself, may seem unnatural and improper. The whole force of language may be materially modified by the omission or insertion of a single word. I deemed it in the outset, therefore, my duty to object to this course of proceeding. No brother of the church called me to order; or ever, out of the vestry informed me, that what I said had pained his feelings. Had any one done so, it would have afforded me pleasure to have explained to him my motives and language; to have disclaimed all intention of wounding; and to have expressed to him my regret that anything said by me should have caused him grief. This I have at all times stood ready to do. This I have done to the church once or twice since this prosecution commenced: but to no purpose.

The fact that I was not called to order, is considered by myself and many others, as important and vital; and as cutting

* See what the pastor says about his duty in this respect, page 149.

this whole case up by the roots : but no attention has been paid to it by the church.

Deacon Tappan has testified before you, that when he called upon me as agent for that private meeting, I expressed regret that his feelings had been injured, though I insisted that I had said or done nothing, but what I believed to be right. I did think this was all he had a right to demand. But the Pastor here suggested that these expressions of regret did not alter the complexion of the case. All this, therefore availed me nothing ; and I am obliged to answer, in detail, to the statement of facts presented by Mr. Dole.

The first specification is that in the debate on the dancing report, I "*charged the pastor with having attempted, from the pulpit, to forestall the opinion of the church, as to the subject matter then under discussion.*"

Now it cannot be denied, and *is not* denied, that Mr. Tappan *did* preach upon dancing while a committee of the church had that subject under consideration. The committee think "*the subject matter was clearly within the range of pastoral duty.*" I think differently. At any rate, if *ordinarily proper*, it seems to me to have been unsuitable *while the subject was in the hands of the church*. The effect of this preaching was to *forestall* the opinion of the church ; and it was, in my opinion, calculated to throw opprobrium upon such as should adopt views similar to my own. This was what I meant to complain of ; and it is what I believe I had a *right* to complain of. Suppose I *was* wrong in my opinion of the duty of the Pastor. That opinion was honestly entertained by myself and many others ; and are the church prepared to establish the precedent that a member may not, in a respectful manner, complain of the course of the Pastor ? and that too in *his presence* ? thus giving him an opportunity to explain or justify ? If so, it seems to me that we are fast approaching to Catholic despotism.

Mr. Dole, the acting member of the committee,* admits, in his report, that in that debate I disclaimed disrespect towards the Pastor ; and that I declared it to be my belief that it *was* an *error of the judgment and not of the heart*. Those who were present at the debate, will recollect that I went farther—that I stated that I knew the duties of the minister were arduous ; and made use of other similar expressions. I stated that if from anything I had said, any one inferred disrespectful feelings

* Judge R. was not present at the "debate," nor at the caucus. Mr. D. and Dr. Snell were present at both the debate and the caucus. Mr. D. was therefore considered by Mr. W. as the "acting member."

towards the Pastor, I was "unfortunate in the use of language," and that "my language belied my heart." Was not this full and ample? It is extremely flattering to my character that those who wish me ill, are obliged to resort to a charge like this for the means to injure me.

The second reported specification is, that I charged the Pastor *with having imputed dishonest views to the minority of the church, when discussing the report of a committee upon the subject of dancing, and declared myself indignant at such imputation.*

The committee go on to state that they do not find it *proved* that the Pastor made that imputation. Now they admit that I *stated to them* that I considered that such imputation *was* made. I stated to them *how* he made it; and was not that *prima facie* evidence that he *did* make it? What testimony was before the committee that such was not the fact? Not a particle. How then did they come to that conclusion? Judge Redington knew nothing of the facts. It was, then, Mr. Dole who fixed this point, and reported it to the church. And here, I cannot but ask if it is not grossly improper that this case should take its hue from him? The church well know how the fact was. I put to the Pastor the following question, as the vote was about to be taken on the acceptance of the report on dancing:

"If the minority of the church honestly differ from the majority about a point of practice, have the majority a right to coerce the minority upon that point?" To which he replied.

"How are the majority to know that the minority are honest? A member may commit some flagrant outrage; and are the church to be satisfied because *he says* he honestly believed he was doing his duty?"*

Such was his answer; and if proof is called for, it is at hand.

Now the subject then under discussion was *dancing*, and to that my question had reference. The *language* therefore, of his answer (I say nothing at present as to the *meaning in his own mind*) was either, an evasion of the question, or else it contained, if language has any force, the imputation alluded to. I thought his answer contained that imputation; and that it was an assertion *generally*, that there existed so little confidence among the members of churches, that the majority could put no faith in the honesty of the declarations of the minority. Sev-

* At the subsequent meeting of the church, the Pastor admitted he made this answer, and he added—"It is a lamentable truth that churches cannot always be sure of the honesty of its members. Hence these cases of discipline." Mr. W. pitied the man who could take pleasure in *insulting* one who was on trial for disrespect to himself.

eral others understood it in the same way. One member of that caucus admitted in the presence of my father, that Mr. Tappan insulted me on that occasion.

Understanding it as I did, (*and with reason, several others understanding it in the same way*) could I do otherwise than express my indignation? But I understand Mr. Tappan *now* to say, that I misunderstood him, and that he *meant* nothing of the kind. Of course, as every man understands his own meaning best, I am bound, in courtesy to admit his explanation; and I have only to add that, if I misunderstood him, I did him an injustice which I sincerely regret. And I trust that he will be the more ready to excuse it, inasmuch as others fell into the same error as myself—a circumstance which shows that I did not *maliciously* put a construction upon his language which it could not bear.

The third specification is—that *I alleged the church was governed by a few—and tolerated outrageous crime by admitting to its communion one who had committed such a crime.*

I *did* allege that the church was too much under the influence of a few—that it was controlled by a few—and that so far as the church were to blame for permitting it, I shared that blame. I wished the church to examine subjects for themselves, and not to adopt views *merely* because *this* man or *that* man said things were thus and so; and it was in this connection that the remark came in. I stated what I believed, and still believe to be true; and I did so from a sense of duty. I consider every member of the church under covenant obligation to rebuke, in the spirit of kindness and frankness, any errors into which *he thinks* the church has fallen. Mr. Dole has frequently, in the hearing of us all, rebuked both the Pastor and the church.

As to the second portion of this charge. The language made use of in debate upon which this is founded, was the following.

"Is it not a fact that a gross libel has been recently committed (by one who is in the habit of communing with us) upon one of the brethren of this church? And a libel ten times more gross and infamous, upon one of the children of the church, without the slightest notice having been taken of them?"

And will not the world say that we tolerate outrageous crime, while a child cannot be permitted to balance to the sound of a piano?"*

* The Rev. Thomas Adams, the editor of the "Temperance Gazette," (a very worthy man, undoubtedly, and engaged in a good cause, but one whose ardour in that cause has sometimes blinded him to the feelings and

The form of interrogation was used; and the above was substantially the language, as I am ready to prove; and as will be recollected, probably by all of you. Perhaps it does, by implication, contain the charge of tolerating "outrageous crime," as reported by the committee. If so, was it not true in a certain sense? Mr. Adams was in the habit of attending our meetings and communing with this church. It cannot be denied, (and if it is, I hold myself ready to prove it,) that he published a libel against my brother of a very aggravating kind. It had outraged the feelings of a whole family to an extent which subsequent reflection has led me to suppose, was not anticipated by Mr. Adams. *My* feelings were very painfully excited, while *those of the church* were calm. What was it to them, that a young man of the strictest integrity, had been unjustly assailed? We were in different temperatures entirely; and on reflection I can easily conceive the surprise of the church at seeing strong emotion upon a subject which they did not allow to trouble *them*. But further. Mr. Adams had, just previous to this discussion, published a libel upon — — Esq. *This*, at least, was extensively known, and talked about. It was in the mouths of every body: but, say the committee, it does not appear that the church were "apprised of objections existing against" him. I can only say that probably every member of the church had seen the last publication; and there is not one who saw it, who did not know, that, *even if not a libel*, it was apparently, a gross breach of christian fellowship.

Of this fact the church were as much in possession as they were subsequently, of the "conduct and speech" of Mrs. Weston, upon which such prompt measures were taken. So that the plea of ignorance avails nothing. I wish here to make a single remark as to my styling this an "outrageous crime." The law so considers a libel which is supposed to tend directly to a breach of the peace; and being a member of the Bar, I prob-

rights of others) had published in his paper, concerning a County Attorney, (meaning the County Attorney for Kennebec, the brother of D. C. W.)—that which was known by the Court and Bar to be atrociously false, and which was considered grossly libelous. Mr. A. afterwards ascertained his mistake and retracted; though with a very ill grace. Had he taken the slightest pains to ascertain the truth of his statements before publication, the libel would not have appeared. It was this recklessness that was the most reprehensible.

The other libel alluded to, was one that appeared in the same paper, upon the State Treasurer for 1840, in which that gentleman was attacked in the coarsest manner, for offering wine to his guests on the occasion of a Legislative party.

ably used a stronger term than another would have done—perhaps too strong; I am inclined to think it was. If so, I am sorry I had not chosen a softer one.

I did not mean to taunt the church, but only, by placing great things with small, to arouse their attention and save them from a position in which they would be jeered at by the multitude. In so doing I acted honestly and fearlessly; and if the church will discipline for a free expression of thought, in the way they are now doing, they will do much to rivet the chains of spiritual domination. Who, hereafter, will dare to differ from the majority with such an example upon the records? Every one in debate, is allowed great latitude; and if every sentence, as it comes glowing from the brain, does not square with the strictest rules of propriety, the ardour, the enthusiasm, the excitement of debate excuses it all. Men of the world extend this courtesy to each other; and shall the christian, instead of extending the mantle of charity, note every sentence with critical nicety?

Mr. Dole says a man should use, in debating a question in the vestry, a different manner from that adopted out of it. With this I cannot agree. I do not hold that a man should have one manner in one place, and *put on* a different one to suit another occasion. A debate should *always* be conducted in a gentlemanly and christian manner, no matter *what the time, or the place*. Every one should speak naturally. It is in debate that the temperament peculiar to each shows itself. Mine, for instance, is as wide as the poles from Mr. Dole's, and for me to imitate him would be impossible. Mr. Little has recently heard me speak upon an occasion, when he must be satisfied my heart was free from any unhallowed emotion; and *he noticed the same manner which seemed to some, so unsuitable for the vestry*.

The fourth charge is—that I assailed the character of a minister of the gospel, in good standing, *without having previously taken any measures of private monition* towards him.

The minister here alluded to, is Mr. Adams, and reference is had to what has just been stated under the third specification. Mr. Adams' character was impinged upon by the language—"Is it not a fact that a gross libel has been committed, &c." With regard to Mr. Adams I will here remark, I have had unkind feelings. I think he committed a grievous wrong: but that does not justify unchristian feelings on my part. But what I have to do with *now* is the church.

The *gist* of this fourth charge is, that I undertook to complain to the church of an individual, *without having first admonished*

him. Who makes this charge? Why, the very man, who has been guilty of the very *same offence* in two instances; and that too on the same sheet of paper on which he penned this charge against myself. An unoffending sister, who fears God and works righteousness, was *suspended* from this church for three months, *from his having been guilty of the very same act which he alleges I have performed.* But the complainant and the committee mistake. I did not intend to enter a complaint against Mr. Adams, but merely to illustrate the subject. I asked, "is it not a fact that a gross libel has been committed," &c. Now if it was *not* a fact, the question was without point. If it *was*, I am of opinion that I had a right to bring it to bear upon the subject of debate.

But suppose I *did* charge Mr. Adams to the church, with having been guilty of crime, in the publication of a libel, was any previous private monition necessary? Not according to the doctrine laid down by Mr. Dole and the Pastor. They have told you that in cases of *public offence*, it is at the option of each whether he shall follow Matt. 18th or not. They said moreover that the offence of Mrs. Weston, if an offence, was a *public* one—that is—that a remark made in the privacy of her own dwelling; and the dancing of children round her own hearthstone, constituted a *public* offence. If so (and I presume no member of this church will dispute *their* authority,) how much more is a *libel* circulated in a newspaper to 3000 subscribers, a public offence!! So that upon their own showing, no private monition was necessary, and the gist of this charge completely fails.

The 5th charge is that during the discussions on the subject of dancing, *I protested against the right of the church to pass obligatory votes on that subject; and declared that I would not feel myself bound by them.*

I did protest as above; and declared that I would not feel myself bound by the views of the church, any farther than those views commended themselves to my own conscience. On this charge I have nothing farther to say, and no apologies to make.

Was I then guilty during that debate of any indecorum? Of anything which imperiously demands church discipline?

I wish here to introduce the remarkable fact that all those members of the church who entertain similar views with myself upon that report upon dancing (and even three or four who do not) think I conducted that debate fairly, honorably, and in a christian manner. Can this be possibly reconciled with the supposition that I was guilty of any palpable indecorum?

Look at another fact. *There are none who blame me except those who voted in favor of that report*; and not quite all of even these. Can any upright, fair, unbiassed, discerning man fail to see in these two facts, the workings of a nature which is sanctified but in part?

Those who thought with me upon dancing, were opposed to an improper spirit, and would have been quick to detect it. And yet *they* could not discover it; while those who were of a *different opinion*, see, as it were intuitively, improper emotions.

The first looked upon me with approbation for standing up in defence of their rights and liberties. The last with disapproval, for resisting a darling project. Hence these two opinions, depending, not upon myself, but varying according as each approved or disapproved the views of the report upon dancing. Is not this state of things alarming? Are there no traces here, of human infirmities and passions? Let it be recollected that there is that in our natures which leads us to bear down upon, and destroy whatever rises up in our path to resist us;—that men, whether christians or not, have always delighted to exercise authority over both the bodies and souls of their fellow men;—that history is full of examples to show, that he who resists any attempts of this kind, no matter how pure his motives, or spotless his conduct, has had both assailed;—that it is full of examples to show that the *best* of men, in pursuit of a favorite project, are liable to have their reason and judgment warped to an extent which will cloud their perception of the motives and acts of those who oppose them. Let all this have the due weight to which it is entitled, and then let each man, as in the presence of his final Judge, apply it to this case. But suppose that an impartial, candid observer should say, that, during that debate, I exhibited a want of christian courtesy: have the church a right to complain? Admitting that anger *was* felt by me, and thoughts found vent which should have remained locked within my own breast: who was the first aggressor? If acts of usurpation on the part of the church towards me, excited this unhallowed feeling, and called forth these expressions, is it becoming in them to charge upon me, sins, which, but for them, would never have had existence? How was it?

I am firmly persuaded (and I am sustained in my belief by the best minds in the country) that this church has no right to legislate on the subject of dancing; and yet they *did* do so in 1838. Since those resolutions were adopted, I have not regarded the second one. Beneath my father's roof, and at the

houses of my christian neighbors, I have sometimes, though rarely, mingled in the dance. My course on these occasions did not conflict with my views of duty. I believed, and still believe, that I was acting rightly, properly, innocently; and were I now summoned to my last account, I should look back upon those acts without a regret. Would to heaven my conscience were as clear, as to all my motives and actions!

But certain members of the church thought this calculated to bring a reproach upon the cause of religion. My sister also came in for a share of the animadversion, because she never hesitated to play dancing tunes upon the piano, at the request of her young friends.

These persons disliked to see that resolution remain a dead letter upon the church statutes. It was thought that it must either be repealed, or the infringements thereof punished. Mrs. Fuller and myself were frequently alluded to as having violated it, in a manner that almost cried to heaven for the discipline of the church. Mr. Tappan, and some members of the church, sometimes conversed with me, but failed to persuade me that their views were in accordance with the bible, or that mine conflicted with the strictest morality. The crisis then came. The olive branch disappeared. But it was thought best, not to commence a course of discipline till the propriety of that resolution had been reaffirmed. This, together with a farther subject, was submitted to a select committee with instructions to bring in a report.

So far as that resolution was concerned, it was intended to have a direct bearing upon my sister and myself. The Pastor has been known to state, that this resolution was originally intended for her, as well as Mrs. ———. It was, therefore, in the strictest sense, a *personal* affair. It was laying the foundation to infringe the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free. It was a preliminary step towards bringing us to the bar of this church, for that which we cannot believe our Saviour disapproves.

That those who have a controlling influence in the church, meant these proceedings to be *obligatory*, is too certain to admit of doubt. The common conversation at the time, the tenor of the remarks in the vestry, and the whole subsequent proceedings, render this point as clear as the sun at noon day.

[Here follows an argument upon this point, but as the same views have mostly been presented in chapter X, it is omitted. In addition to those views, the paper here referred to the reason *why* the charge for playing on the violin was dis-

missed—because *Matt. 18th had not been pursued*. See, also, Judge R.'s motion (page 198,) the debate thereon, and its final fate.]

All this, [the paper continued] puts beyond a doubt the correctness of my first impression—that it was the intention of the movers in this affair to call to their aid the discipline of the church.

I then believed, and I now believe, that they had no right thus to do; that it was an unjustifiable and unwarrantable interference with private liberty. Such also is the opinion of men, eminent for their learning and piety, whose names I can mention if desirable. When, therefore, I came into the vestry, I was keenly alive to the injustice with which I was treated; and was determined to resist what I regarded as spiritual tyranny.

I listened to the report of the committee on dancing; and found that it went beyond my utmost fears. Those parents (and there are many of them, and all ornaments of the christian profession) who allowed their children to partake of this amusement, were charged, indirectly, with being destitute, so far as this was concerned, of natural affection. One of these was my mother; and yet an unmarried man, who never looked upon the sports of his own children, and another who at the age of eighteen received an injury which impaired his health, and tinged the spring-tide of life with the sombre shades of autumn—these men, I say, thought proper to make the charge alluded to. I must confess it cut me to the quick, falling as it did, upon the head of one whom I have always regarded with reverence and affection—upon one, whose character for devoted piety is beyond the reach of the polluting breath of slander.

Is it to be wondered at, that, under these circumstances, strong emotion found utterance? And was it right for those who not only usurped power, but, as I conceived, slandered one whom God has commanded me to honor, to treasure up *for future censure*, every word, and tone, and look of mine on that occasion? Suppose I *did* overstep the bounds of righteous indignation; and felt stirring within me the unholy pulses of human feeling: are they who caused it, to sit in judgment upon what *they called forth*? to demand concessions for sin, which, but for their injustice, would never have been committed? Would it not be more in accordance with christian charity, to make allowances for one who has not yet thrown off the imperfections of his nature? To examine whether there be not a beam in their own eye, before they undertake to extract the mote from a brother's?

But this is not all. While the subject of dancing was before that committee, the preaching from the pulpit had a direct bearing upon it. It was paving the way for that which was to follow. It was calculated, in my opinion, to cast a reproach upon any who should oppose the forthcoming document—to brand them as “gay professors” and “pleasure loving christians.” It was calculated (and in my opinion, had the effect) to prevent that full and fair interchange of opinion which was so important to a right decision—to deter the timid from hazarding an objection to that, which was advocated from the pulpit in so positive a manner. And when I rose to argue with the church, whose minds had thus been *preoccupied*, I felt that my position was not such as I had a right to claim—that I was doing that which they had been previously instructed to look upon, as almost decisive evidence of want of christian character.

Is it then, in view of all these irritating circumstances, to be wondered at, if some human feeling *did* exhibit itself in my language or manner? Look upon the subject candidly and charitably, and consider whether these were not sufficient to have caused anger, in the breast of the holiest man that breathes. To claim that my motives and feelings, during this time, of what I regarded as persecution, were as pure as those of the angels in heaven, would be to claim a perfection *far* beyond that to which I can pretend to have reached. The emotions of the mind run into each other like the colors of the rainbow. That which is not right borders upon that which is. The improper verges upon the proper. On a whole view of the subject, I am satisfied that the provocations I received, excited stronger emotions than were consistent with the religion of Him, who, when reviled, reviled not again. I do not deny, that a keen sense of your injustice, excited in my breast unchristian feelings. So far as I have felt improperly, God and my own conscience condemn me: but will not the blood of it be required at *your* hands? What now is my duty? Suppose you *are* the most to blame, and the first aggressors. Does that excuse unchristian feeling on my part? By no means. Does it make it any the less my duty to ask your forgiveness, if I have felt thus?

Judge Redington has put to me this case.

A man grossly insults his brother and heaps upon him injury upon injury. The brother feels towards the man who has abused him, an unkindness which should never have place in the breast of the christian. Does not duty require that he

should go to the person who has injured him and ask forgiveness for those unkind feelings? May he not go to him and say—"sir you have injured and provoked me. You have excited within me unholy passion: but Christ has told us to be meek, mild and forgiving. He has told us to pray for our enemies, and those who despitefully use us and persecute us. He himself, while nailed to the cross, called down blessings upon those who placed him there. My feelings have been inconsistent with the religion of this holy Being; and I *ask your forgiveness*. I feel this to be *my* duty; and shall wait till God shall lead you to the performance of yours."

This is a case, substantially, presented by Judge Redington.* It was a view which commended itself to *his* mind, and I have no doubt that the man who should act in the manner *there* pointed out, would command the approval of the whole moral universe. I had been in the habit of thinking, that as the church were, in my opinion, the *first* aggressors, they should be the *first* to make concessions: but this illustration shows that each party has duties to perform, independent of the other. I have considered the subject seriously, and as one whose acts *here* take hold of a higher and better state of being; and I shall now endeavor to perform my duty—not confining myself to the charges in the complaint, but looking at the whole affair in its broadest sense.

I say then to you—I believe you have injured and persecuted me and my father's family without cause. I believe that the Pastor and Mr. Dole, by their advice and directions, by changing issues, and by management—of which I will not speak—have been guilty of the most unmanly persecutions against myself, my sister, and worse than all, against a mother whose grey hairs and devoted piety, ought to have been sufficient to protect her from spiritual domination.

I believe the statements of Deacon Tappan also, in the course of these proceedings, have not been in accordance with truth.

I wish the church to notice that I am merely stating my convictions in all honor and honesty,—convictions which have been *forced* upon me by circumstances which *seem to me* to admit of but one interpretation. I did not make the circumstances, neither did I create the laws which control the human mind. These circumstances, acting according to those laws, have produced the above convictions. I have struggled against them.

* Judge R. did not mean to give any opinion in this case, but knowing Mr. W.'s views, supposed a case, to meet them.

I have extended christian charity to the utmost extent which my nature allows; and heaven knows that such opinions are to me a source of pain and grief. If they are erroneous, I do these individuals and the church great injustice, and I hope I shall receive their pardon and that of my final Judge. In such a case, I am the one most to be pitied: for so long as their consciences are clear, they have nothing to fear from God or man. I wish the church to bear in mind that I make no assertions, but am merely expressing convictions, which are honestly entertained; and which will remain till the secrets of all hearts are disclosed at the dread tribunal of heaven.

Having these views, I have allowed myself to become excited, and feelings of unkindness, inconsistent with the religion of Him who commanded us to love our enemies, have swelled in my bosom against these individuals and the church; and these emotions have perhaps found vent in words, looks, and tones, which cannot command the approval of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. For whatever there has been in me, inconsistent with His religion with regard to these individuals and the church, I ask forgiveness, first of God and secondly of them.

I have thus done what I believe to be my duty, and am willing to wait till these persons and the church, shall do theirs, and make atonement where it is due.

In conclusion, I feel it to be my duty to renew my protest against any member of that caucus, voting in this case, for reasons already given. I am willing (and they *ought* to be) to abide by the decision of the rest of the church."

Adjourned.

CHAPTER XX.

“Let us not give heed to any of his words.” Jer. xviii, 18.

Vestry, Friday evening, Oct. 2nd.

THE PASTOR called upon the accused to put his defence on file.

D. C. W. replied that he would consider of it. Undoubtedly he had the right to defend himself verbally, but had thrown what he had to say into writing, for his own convenience. If any member wished it read again, or any part of it, he would read it as often as it was called for.

Then followed some conversation about the meeting at the house of Dea. Means.

J. HOOPER denied that there was any intention of keeping that meeting secret.

D. C. W. said that it was very remarkable that so large a number concurred in keeping it secret, if there was no such understanding. That it was kept secret, no one could deny.

After some farther conversation,

DEA. MEANS said that the *reason* why that meeting was to be kept *private* was, that Mrs. W.'s feelings might not be injured!

After some farther conversation,

B. DAVIS moved that the church pass the following vote.*

“*Whereas* a complaint was filed last spring, and is now pending before the church, against Daniel C. Weston, one of its members, as may be seen by recurring

*This was drawn up and read by another gentleman, as his view of what the church would be sustained by usage, in doing, if they intended to proceed to excision.

to our records; and from the filing of that complaint to the present time, Mr. Weston has not attended public worship with us, though living near our place of worship, and not prevented therefrom by sickness, or other physical cause. And not only has he thus neglected to walk with us in the Divine ordinance of public worship, but has in many ways manifested his light estimation of this church, and a willingness that it should labor under the disesteem of others, and has announced a determination never more to return to its fellowship. That this determination of his is fully settled and to be carried into effect, is evident, not only from his own declaration, but also from his proceedings in relation to a religious society of another denomination, whose ministrations he has for several months attended, and whose church he has avowed his intention of joining.

In view of these facts, and of all the circumstances of the case, and after the employment by the church of all due measures for the purpose, we are no longer permitted to hope that Mr. Weston can be regained to the embrace and fellowship of this church.

Such being the condition of things, it is not perceived that any valuable results can be expected to flow from his farther relationship with us.

And whereas, in relation to a member so situated, as Mr. Weston is, it is the right of a church to consider and declare itself discharged from any further connection, or relationship; Therefore,

Voted, that Mr. Weston's connection with this church be now severed, and his relationship to it dissolved."

This was seconded.

DEA. MEANS was opposed to abandoning the complaint in this way, and basing the action of the church upon other things. He thought it would be very difficult to explain to the public, and wished to have the vote based upon the complaint.

JUDGE REDINGTON, said he was prepared to maintain that the church had no right to pass a vote of excision,

for anything charged in the complaint That was a mere dispute about phraseology.

After some farther discussion, the motion was put and prevailed.

The Pastor then concluded the meeting with a prayer, commencing as follows.

O God! We have this evening been engaged in very serious, solemn, and important business; and those who have taken part in the proceedings, have acted conscientiously. We have been CUTTING OFF FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, one of its members; and if WHAT WE HAVE DONE ON EARTH SHALL BE RATIFIED IN HEAVEN, how critical is the condition of the individual concerned! &c. &c.

Adjourned.

Before concluding, the reporter has a remark or two to offer.

Was not Mr. Weston entitled to have the complaint against him, passed upon by the church? He had been suspended on that complaint, for five months. He had just answered to the facts as reported by the committee appointed in the case, and was present, ready to abide by their decision.

Again. Judge Weston and his wife had formally left their fellowship, and had joined another church; and the committee, appointed in that case, had reported (*and the report was adopted*)—that the usurpations of the church exhibited “palliatives of no small weight,” though not an “*entire* justification” of their course. Were not the same “palliatives” equally weighty in the case of D. C. Weston, who, notwithstanding, the same grievances, had not joined another society, but was there ready to answer to all charges against him?

And yet they abandon the complaint which seems to

have been a mere pretext, take no notice of the reply of the accused, and bring in a verdict of excommunication, on grounds foreign to the indictment, of which Mr. W. had no previous notice, and from which he had no opportunity to defend himself, if indeed any defence is possible, from vague and impalpable insinuations. One thing, it is true, was tangible. He had attended another meeting: but was there not a cause? They say no "physical" one, and yet for nearly eight weeks of this time, Mr. W. was absent from town. He was not aware of any objection to him on this account. When Mrs. Fuller was asked why she had broken her covenant by attending other preaching, her reply was that the church had first broken the covenant, which was mutual, and that it had therefore ceased to be binding upon her. To this there had been no reply.

They say "after the employment by the church, of all due measures for the purpose, we are no longer permitted to hope that Mr. Weston can be regained," &c. What were these measures? Mr. W. never heard of any, and there is no member of that church, from the Pastor downwards, who ever exchanged a word with him upon the subject.

Did he deserve thus summarily, and without notice, to be cut "OFF FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST," because he could not bring himself to listen to the Rev. B. Tappan, but had been a constant attendant upon preaching which they admitted was Evangelical? Why, then, was not Mrs. Fuller cut "off from the church of Christ"? She had, since the filing of the complaint, not only, not attended Mr. T.'s preaching, but shuddered at the thought. Why were not Mrs. I., Mrs. W., Mrs. P., and Mrs. H. all cut "off from the church of Christ"? And yet all these, though equally guilty in this respect with Mr. W. (and more so, for with the exception of Mrs. F. and Mrs. I. they were not compelled by personal grievances, as was he) were dismissed and recommended to St. Marks, while he is singled out, stigmatized, and destined to appear in the "Christian Mirror" as excommunicated, for that which in others was not treated as a crime.

But, they will say, that the latter was further guilty of holding them in "light estimation." Now there was no proof that these other persons held them in any greater esteem than he. They, neither of them had given so great proofs of regard as had Mr. Weston, who, at the risk of their high displeasure, and of being cut "OFF FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST," had endeavored to point out their errors, and deter them from a course which could not but end in trouble and disgrace.

He held the church in "light estimation"! There was no proof of this; but even supposing it true, was that a crime? Must a man be cut "OFF FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" for holding the South Parish Church in Augusta, in "light estimation"? Such sweeping condemnation will find but few advocates, we apprehend, out of that body. Esteem is an involuntary sentiment, arising from the perception of worth; and we are not aware that it can be forced upon people by positive enactment. Those who wish to be esteemed, must endeavour to deserve it. We know of no short cut to the homage of the virtuous. Suppose then, this allegation true, it was an affair, entirely beyond his control, and if a crime, must be charged upon that Being, who endowed him with moral perceptions.

"Light estimation"! What is the measure of esteem demanded? And at what point does the affection with which they are regarded, change from innocence to guilt? If members are to be cut "off from the church of Christ," in a certain stage of their esteem, it becomes important to know what that stage is.

Did they require that Mr. W.'s esteem should rise as high as their self esteem? If so, he had no means of ascertaining the exact measure of their self esteem, although he had some reason to believe it to be not very low.

"In many ways manifested his light estimation"! They do not deign to tell how, when, or where. Dea. T. had made *specifications*, and that course of proceeding had not turned out so favorably as was expected. They now say "in many ways," and leave the imagination to do the

rest. It was as flattering to Mr. W. as it was otherwise to the church, that to accomplish their purpose, they were obliged to abandon tangible charges, and resort to what could not possibly admit of reply. In cases affecting the reputation, the liberty, or the property of the citizen, all civil courts require every allegation to be plain, clear, specific. And shall a man be cut "OFF FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST," AND CONSIGNED OVER TO EVER-LASTING DAMNATION, upon charges that he cannot understand, and all explanation of which is denied?

That these proceedings which we have disclosed, were conducted with prayer, affords no proof that they are right. It is no new thing that the name of God should be invoked by those who, by means of prayer, would have the world believe that He was a party to their doings. Witches were burnt, Quakers hung, and Heretics impaled, with prayer. The world has never seen an ecclesiastical outrage, that was not perpetrated with prayer. Within a few months, a gross violation of the laws of God and man, and of every principle of decency and humanity, was committed at the Oberlin Institute, with prayer. And nearly three thousand years ago, impiety attempted concealment by shouting "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these." But hearken to the rebuke of the prophet. "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods, whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, WE ARE DELIVERED TO DO ALL THESE ABOMINATIONS"?

APPENDIX.

A.

Mrs. Ingraham belonged to the "Maternal Association" (composed principally of mothers in Mr. T.'s church,) which met monthly. Her age and religious character made her a prominent member. After the dialogue (page 103) she was treated with great coolness at the meetings of the society, but attended as usual. This coolness was perceptibly increased, after Mrs. I. had left Mr. T.'s church, and she took an opportunity to ask her friend, the Secretary of the Association, whether her presence was desired by them. The Secretary replied, that she, personally, was very happy to have Mrs. I. continue to meet with them, but that, probably, others felt differently; and that she would inquire.

Mrs. I. subsequently received the following note, to which we subjoin her reply. The Secretary is, of course, not responsible for the insulting nature of the note to Mrs. I., being by virtue of her office, merely the organ of communication.

Augusta, 26th Oct., 1840.

MY DEAR MRS. INGRAHAM—Tomorrow at half past two o'clock, if the weather be pleasant, the Maternal Association will meet. I regret that circumstances in my family have prevented my giving you an earlier notice of it, and of the result of your message.

I have not been able to see all the ladies of the society, but those to whom I have mentioned your wishes, authorize me to assure you, though they have felt, and do feel, deeply wounded by the spirit, they understand you have manifested toward our

church and Pastor, that they certainly feel no objection to your future participation and intercourse with the Association.

Affectionately Yours,

— — —, *Secretary.*"

"Having thus replied to the message you left with me, permit me to assure you, that your attendance upon the meetings of the society will afford me much pleasure. Still trusting that united effort will effectuate the important objects at which we all ought to aim—

Yours truly,

— — —.
In haste."

— — —
"Augusta, October 27th, 1840.

MY DEAR MRS. ———: Your note of last evening was duly received, and I am much obliged to you for attending to my request; but I have to say that on leaving your house, after the last Maternal meeting, I determined in my own mind, that I should not probably ever visit it again, and I find nothing in your note to lead me to alter my determination. I then thought and *still* think, that I can never again encounter a meeting with persons who treat me with such evident marks of coldness and want of cordiality. I had my answer, after entering the room, where the association were assembled, without your making the enquiry, whether it would be pleasant to them to have me meet with them. Yes, my dear Mrs. ———, I plainly perceive my presence is not desired there, and of course, I forever withdraw from the Association—and the responsibility of it whether for good or evil, rests with the members of the Association—for had they continued to treat me with kindness, and christian courtesy, I should probably have never left them.

Mrs. ———, your President and leader, has met me three times, the past season, at the Maternal meeting, and has not spoken to me at all, nothing but a slight bow as she entered the room. I have thought this hardly consistent with our former friendship, but perhaps it was all right. I do not feel worthy to be spoken to by any christian. I feel that I am less than the least of all God's children, if indeed I am one, and can offer no other petition than, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I had hoped that we could meet on the broad ground of our common christianity, as professed disciples of the same Saviour, seeking and praying for an object dear to all our hearts, even the conversion of our children; without bringing into

view our conflicting opinions on other subjects, but I find I am mistaken, and therefore yield the point, and take my leave.

It was always pleasant to me to meet with *christians* ; it is *still* so ; and perhaps I can find some yet, without the pale of Mr. Tappan's church. I have one reply to make respecting the "spirit" which the Association say I have manifested. I would ask what *evidence*, what *proof* they have, that I have exercised a wrong spirit ? I have scarcely spoken with any of them for the past summer that I recollect of. I have met them a few times at the Maternal meeting. Did I manifest a wrong spirit there ? "Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and such measure as ye mete, shall be measured to you again." I suppose Paul was accused of a wrong spirit, when he said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall ; for sittest thou here to judge me *according* to the law, and commandest me to be smitten *contrary* to the law ?" And even our Saviour himself, I presume, was accused of severity, when he said, "wo, unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites !"

If disapproving of past proceedings is wrong, I cheerfully abide the decision. I do *heartily* disapprove of them. I feel indignant and *ever shall*, at the treatment my sister Weston and her family have received, at the hands of Mr. Tappan and his church. I shall never cease to condemn them, for the *gross injustice* with which my beloved sister has been treated, *until they satisfactorily* explain why *she is singled out* from others, who do the same things and much worse. I believe it to be contrary to the gospel of Jesus—I have not so learned Christ. And although Mr. Tappan has said, that "no one has left his church, whom he would wish to retain," yet I shall say, fearless of contradiction, that Mrs. Weston has not left her superior behind her, in the *South Parish Church*, one who habitually manifests more of the virtues which constitute the christian character. Although she is my sister, I must say it. "I have become a fool in glorying, but ye have compelled me." Remember the *parable of the tares of the field*, how the disciples would have gathered them up, but our Saviour said, "nay, lest while ye root up the tares, ye gather up the wheat also ; let both grow together until the harvest," &c. I leave you all to judge, whether, with the *exception of myself*, any wheat has been rooted up.

One word respecting the Pastor, and I have done. I am not of the number of those who consider it an unpardonable sin to censure *him*—I consider him to be as much

amenable at the bar of public opinion, as any other man; and I am perfectly free to say to the Maternal Association, that I have never felt, since I removed from *Thomaston to this place*, which is more than *ten years*, that I had a kind and affectionate Pastor, to whom I could go confidently: and Mr. Tappan *knows* himself, if he would testify, that I have been dissatisfied with him for years. Also, further, it has ever been a great trouble to me, that *my children* could not attend on the ministry of some one, whom they could love; and I have at times, utterly despaired of their ever receiving any spiritual benefit, unless *Mr. Tappan was removed*, or *another evangelical church* was established among us: the *latter* alternative has taken place, and it has been with joy, that we have fled under the shadow of its wings. It seems to me as a *refuge* from the *storm*, and a *covert* from the *tempest*. The worship and service of the Episcopal church is delightful to me, and I feel happy in being gathered into its *fold*. We have an excellent Pastor, whose preaching is truly evangelical; and in his more private interviews, and pastoral visits, I should say he was unsurpassed.

My dear children also are more interested, than they have ever been before, in the services of the sanctuary, and I can perceive a gradual improvement, especially in the older ones, since they have attended on the service of the Episcopal church, so that, on the whole, I feel that I have great reason to "*thank God and take courage*." "*Forgetting the things which are behind*, I would press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And now, my dear friend, I bid you an affectionate farewell, assuring you of my sincere personal regard and esteem—also present my love to the other members of the Association, and although we may not pray *together*, here on earth, yet may we still continue to remember each other, before a throne of grace in our private retirement. "God forbid, that we should sin against the Lord," in ceasing to pray for each other, and our respective children. I would close, by saying, in the words of our excellent Liturgy, "from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," "Good Lord deliver us." And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you forever. With respect and affection, I subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.

A. G. INGRAHAM.

P. S. I should be glad to have you read this to the Maternal Association; and I should also be very willing for Mr. Tappan to see it."

After this, "*Mrs. Ingraham's insulting note to the 'Maternal Association,' and the very calm and christian reply of that society,*" was, forthwith noised through the church! So difficult it is for some people to represent things truly! And so easy is it merely to invert facts!

B.

CHURCH COVENANT.

"You, being sensible of your dependence upon God, and of your inability of yourself to keep covenant with Him, yet relying on His grace, and in obedience to His will, do freely, sincerely, and heartily, take the Lord Jehovah, the all perfect Governor of the world, to be your God; promising and covenanting, that by the help of His grace, which you devoutly implore, you will be devoted to love and fear Him, with the whole heart, and to walk in all respects conscientiously, so as to glorify and please Him.

You believe, with all the heart, that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah promised of old, the only begotten Son of God; and you gladly take Him to be your Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King; devoting yourself to learn of Him, to trust in Him, to imitate Him, and to be subject to His authority, according to all His holy commandments.

And herewithal you profess repentance towards God respecting sins that are past, imploring His gracious forgiveness through the blood—the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; and that, as you may fail, in any respects, of a due observance of His covenant, you will humbly and penitently wait upon Him for His pardoning and healing mercy.

You have a firm persuasion of the truth and divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; and of the sufficiency and perfection of them, as a rule of faith and life. As the only perfect rule, you will use your best endeavors to respect, consult, and receive them, and to conform your belief, temper, and conversation to them.

You take the Holy Spirit of God to be your Director into the sense of the Sacred Oracles, and to be your Sanctifier and Comforter.

You will sacredly regard every personal and relative duty.

You will submit yourself to the care and discipline of this church, so far as they shall be guided by God's most holy Word.

You will dedicate your children, or those minors whom Providence may commit to your parental care, to the Lord in baptism; promising to use your best diligence, that they may be educated in the way of Christianity.

And you promise to walk with this church in all the holy ordinances of God."

"Hereupon it is declared, in the name and by order of this church, that they do receive you into their sacred fellowship; promising to watch over you for your good unto edification, and to walk with you in all the instituted ordinances of the Christian Religion."

"And now, dear brother, [or sister] the vows of God are upon you. You have sworn unto the Lord, and you cannot go back. Take heed that you do not depart from the living God. But be thou faithful unto death, and He will give thee a crown of life."



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